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## POETRY:—

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# THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE

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## WORDS FOR OLD AIRS

*By Padraic Fallon*

*[I dedicate these songs to Mrs. Costello of Tuam, who made that most interesting collection of Irish Folk Songs known as "Amhrain Muighe Sheola."].*

*To write words to a tune is to make the singer the poet's taskmaster. There are certain things a singer cannot do easily, so a song must accommodate itself to these. The impact of a song, too, is immediate, so images must not be elaborate and the word-phrase must build itself to the song-phrase, a thing which in practice means that one's lines must come to a natural pause at the end of every second line. In any words made to an air, then, the song comes first, not the intrinsic poetry, and the poet works to a most annoying discipline which explains probably why most poets leave song-making alone. The reward, however, when a good folk-singer takes the song in hand, seems to me to be worth all the trouble.*

### THE COCK

*Amhrain Muighe Sheola, No. 40*

A hen and a cock they set off together,  
Walking all Ireland to see what they saw ;  
Arriving in Galway in very low feather,  
For strollers they're taken and locked up by law.

With William O'Heelan 'tis where they were grazing,  
Eating his berries without any pay ;  
The Sheriff in tunic and boots came a-gazing  
And in the black hole, oh, he locked them away.

O Great was that cock above all in this country ;  
Spurs he did wear of white silver from Spain,  
A straw hat and gloves and a whip were his whimsy  
The day he'd decide to strut to a fair.

It's down there at Millbrook you'd hear them to praise him,  
 Women who're drinking the blue buttermilk ;  
 My soul for that fellow, they say he's from Asia,  
 He treads our wild ways as if he walked on silk.

O Golden that cock above all in this nation ;  
 Worlds he'd awaken and crow down a barn ;  
 No gaol it would hold him or be his damnation ;  
 But hungry old women they brought him to harm.

'Twas down at Slieve Bawn that he chanced to be strolling,  
 Noble the hen-bird that tended his pranks ;  
 Those monsters they coaxed him, they petted and stroked him,  
 Then led home the king with a rope to his shanks.

O Why did they need him and mutton a-begging,  
 Beef at the butcher's and hens by the score ;  
 They pulled off his feathers, his head got a wiggling,  
 And still they do say that he sang by the door.

My curse on the day, O the Buttermilk ladies,  
 Beggars and naygurs who throng the back-door ;  
 They tore him to pieces for salt for their praties  
 And danced round the nation to show his back-bone.

The hen who did lay us a hundred eggs daily,  
 Queen of Quadrilles when she'd dance on one leg,  
 Is moping and drooping, so haggard and pale, she  
 Will never no more sit her down on an egg.

O Why did you ate him ? What good luck can follow ?  
 Gold was my cock's head, the stars made his tail,  
 The King of Creation, with never his fellow,  
 And since he was murdered the country does fail.

The clergy will blame you, O Women of Mayo ;  
 Walk over the nation and see all the harm,  
 Each hen on her perch, never saying her prayers,  
 But wings hanging down, her head under her arm.



O Rich was that cock, and what stomach can hold him ;  
 Headstone or spade do not lay him away ;  
 O Furious women, a little red hen says  
 You'll meet a great cock on the highroad one day.

## THE OLD MAN'S WIFE

*Amhrain Muighe Sheola.*

Page 22.

*Bean an tSeanduine*

HE :

Coming home from Balla town,  
 Two miles this side of Clare,  
 I met a maid side-saddled on  
 The crook of an ancient mare :  
 I said, are you an old man's wife ?  
 I am, good sir, said she,  
 And one more year of such a life  
 Will be the end of me.

SHE :

No luck attend my kin who  
 Trepanned me in my youth  
 And gave me for a cockatoo  
 An old man gone in the tooth :  
 A young lad's like the waking thrush  
 Who'll break a song at dawn ;  
 What good's the old man who robs the bush  
 For legs to hobble on ?

HE :

It's I'm the man can keep a house ;  
 No drink, no pipe for me ;  
 The wild bird's left to gather haws  
 And his nest is the bare-boughed tree ;  
 Young girls will seek the soft place where  
 Good food and fire abound ;  
 A young man's feet are maybe fair,  
 The old man's are on the ground.

SHE :

The old man counts things all too dear,  
A young man sports his pay,  
He'd dress me up in satin wear  
Just to look at me all the day :  
It's guineas down the story is,  
What he'll not spend he'll lose ;  
He'd never send me to the Mass  
With patches on my shoes.

HE :

Ah, that's the way the money goes  
And publicans grow fat ;  
If bees make honey from the rose,  
They will hive it against black fast ;  
Go spend all on your merry boy,  
And in a year you'll lack,  
You'll wear the beggar's finery—  
A bag upon your back.

SHE :

Oh, better beg and live a while,  
And share a love that's young  
Than watch an old man spitting bile  
And hear him to clack his tongue ;  
A servant to a cough all day,  
A doctor all the night ;  
To wed an old man is the way  
To kill my youth's delight.

HE :

The priest will see you keep your bonds.

SHE :

My youth will say him Nay.

HE :

My stick will keep you inside bounds.

SHE :

I have legs that can run away.

BOTH :

Old men must this example take :

A maid will not be tied,

She'll rove off with a handsome rake,

Her high horse for to ride.

MARY BROWN

*From the Irish of Callanan.  
Page 41. Amhrain Muighe Sheol*

O Anaghdown, on the rocks above you  
Resides that maiden, my heart-scald,  
The apple-blossom, the flower of women,  
Who has kept me now for a year enthralled.

I spoke her softly in conversation ;  
No maiden moves me the way you do,  
Elope with me and the Irish nation  
I will tell you, darling, I'll make a-new :

I'll till the hills, I will walk on water,  
I'll hoist up the sun when rain spills down,  
I'll give cows milk and the moon a daughter  
And assign the heavens to Mary Brown ;

O Light and lustre, no candles show me  
This page I write on, only you ;  
Your head is making a lamplight round me  
And the night takes over your lovely hue :

Oh, many heroes they walk the highway  
Towards Anaghdown where you abide,  
But I do follow the secret pathway  
My love-sick daydreams wore to your side.

In thoughts I go out and daily nightly  
My eyes are gazing on your half door ;  
To-morrow, darling, Oh, come and meet me  
When the hurlers gather in Turloughmore.

O Flower of women, I'm green and jealous  
When I think of all who follow you,  
The Mayo-men and the gaitered fellows  
And myself among them like a broken shoe.

My mind is blasted, my means are wasted,  
I'm a stranger here in my own town  
For love of her, I never tasted,  
Bright morning's maiden, sweet Mary Brown.

THE PRETTY GIRLS OF LOUGHREA      *Amh. Mui. Sheola.*  
No. 22

My heart-strings make me music  
If I but think of you ;  
And if you call me, darling,  
I'll wear a feathered shoe,  
And swim the Suir and Slaney  
And the Shannon any day  
To talk with you, my dear one,  
And walk you round Loughrea.

Did I own all Portumna  
And the markets of Athlone,  
Or the wharfs and the money  
That belong to Limerick town  
I would part them to your people  
O if you'd let me presume  
To look upon you one long day  
And be your squire in Tuam.



O Rose-leafed maid, it's easy  
 To blame the wastrel now,  
 But who was ever able  
 To harrow with a plough;  
 Not reared was I to labour  
 Or to watch the season's way,  
 But gambling, sport and pleasure  
 Lost me my own Loughrea.

In her grey house by the water  
 My love is dwelling still,  
 The moon's one only daughter,  
 O Lamp upon the Hill;  
 She'll braid her hair at evening  
 And those who walk the way  
 They think it's the moon that's rising  
 On the grey lake of Loughrea.

Last night abroad in London  
 I spent my only crown;  
 I toasted my own one  
 And after cried tears down;  
 I walked the lamps till morning  
 And I heard your harkaway;  
 I wished I was the red fox  
 That you hunted round Loughrea.

No Lent will last out Easter  
 And after, summer comes;  
 And fasting is feasting  
 When the sloe-bush buds and blooms;  
 The Queen of Hearts is lonely,  
 But the Joker 's still to play;  
 I'll lead and I'll take her from you,  
 O Strong men of Loughrea.

## THE TWISTING OF THE ROPE

*Londubh an Chairn 32*

If, O Woman, you be mine,  
 Be always mine I pray;  
 Nor moon-stray with the maidens  
 Who turn night into day;  
 Be mine, all mine, all time,  
 Till clocks and steeples nod;  
 Oh, my grief, we do not walk as one  
 On Sunday before God.

My head is grey with longing,  
 I wither in my shoes:  
 It is bread that blesses hunger,  
 Not words a priest may use:  
 Last night your house was lighted,  
 I thought it haunted by God  
 Till your mother set me to twist the rope  
 That put me on the road.

Oh, my love is the virgin  
 Whose lamp lasts out the year;  
 But my Christmas of stars the constant maid  
 Whose light outlasts the flare;  
 The maid who strays between us  
 And plays a double tune  
 Let her twist a rope through the doorway  
 To her grandmother, the moon.

## O SWEET YOUTH

*Amhrain Muighe Sheola. No. 4*

Oh, tell me, Sweet Youth, Oh,  
 And where did you sleep last night?  
 On the bare board of your bed, Maiden,  
 And yet you were no bride.  
 If I told you my heavy grief, Love,  
 Not a wink you'd sleep at all;  
 It was your coffin I saw them carry,  
 While I beat on the wall.

At dawn when I waken  
 My Hail-Mary is a tear ;  
 And at night-time on my pillow  
 All my pain is my prayer ;  
 And my hair, O Sweet Youth, is going  
 Off my head like morning mist ;  
 In my mouth the drouth of the dying,  
 The mouth my Love dares not to kiss.

I'll die if to-morrow  
 My love I do not see ;  
 I'll cross the blue lakewater  
 To the Joyce country :  
 Oh, Love leads me with a whisper  
 That's more slender than a thread,  
 And if the wide world would turn over  
 I'd think 'twas he that turned his head.

They talk and all their words  
 But pass me on the way  
 Because my ears are waiting  
 The soft things you won't say ;  
 They tell me you spend and waste all ;  
 But a Youth knows no long sleeve ;  
 It's no old widower, wise and withered  
 I'd wish at all to tie my sheaf.

## THE CATCH

*By K. Arnold Price*

They shoal into my net in a silver slobber,  
 Fauves from the aqueous forest where all is beginning  
 Always, and eld is graved in the rocks' intaglio ;  
 Wanwits prolapsing, apposite for declension,  
 Unfocused, unconfederate, but potent,  
 So fitly formed for the current's filament  
 There would seem a will for survival, at least a skill,

Perspicuously modifying precarious habit  
 Time out telling, from the first division  
 To the label extinct or the footnote obsolete,  
 Or a place in the minatory flux of tidal living.  
 They come with the savage odour of fecundity;  
 And a deep weed tugs, pulling the inwit back  
 To a feeling of firstness when being was pulsation,  
 Motion and promotion; and always the cycle of shock  
 Levelling design to an amorphous desert;  
 But recurrent too the insurrectionary motive  
 Importunate, compelling flux to form,  
 Balancing the world's weight with the innate incitement,  
 Tradition's prompting with the imperative of mutation  
 In an empiric equipoise, revealing  
 Lineaments of the implicit with the ages' imprimatur.

And I, searching among the poignant welter,  
 Must cast into categories, pare and appraise,  
 Lay by to season, expose to the tongue's test,  
 Choose from the surge of ambiguous munificence  
 Symbols for a simulacrum that will serve  
 The unequivocal delineation of my will  
 And set my seal upon the face of chaos;  
 Else what am I; no seal, no quiddity;  
 A deaf-mute vagrant, vapid as a minnow  
 Flicking an ineffectual fin to mark  
 A rudimentary sentience, a twilight premonition  
 Of the end of an epoch, or an ego's private catastrophe.

## NO ANSWER

*By R. S. Thomas*

Speak, farmer, over the green sod  
 To us forsaken by the sham gods  
 In whom we trusted. Where has the spring gone?  
 Is it always autumn even in the fields?  
 Primitive quiet in which you work?



## II

Speak, friend ; does not the earth renew  
Its broken pattern, building again  
Its green citadels, razed by the winds  
And gaunt frosts, quarrying the face  
Of the grim heavens for the spring's ore ?  
Born here and reared, have you no proof  
Of the slow summer's ultimate reign ?

Silence, silence ; only the eyes'  
Inscrutable greyness turned to mine ;  
And the hand's gesture, vague as a branch,  
Rowing for ever the wind's stream.

## INVOCATION FOR A SCULPTOR

*By Hugh Connell*

This is seed dropped carefully by the road-side,  
A commemorative fire of light weeds, of words,  
For the birthday of an unhewn statue.  
Who knows where a spark may fall ?

I drowsed and my pony drowsed in the farmers queue  
At the Schoolhouse Cross. The orderly tankards gleam,  
The pearls of mist drip slow from the garrons' beards ;  
I hear no young grass grow, no bud-shells crack,  
But May-day air is heavy with scent of growth  
And silence, except for the chuckle and shuffle  
When children flutter in bunches out of the mirk,  
As it might be birds that drop from a cloud, then go,  
Still half-hungry and scared, from our hemmed-in fields.  
Up to the Cross and behind the queue they trot  
To the school-yard gate, and are offered to Pallas Athene  
Through that narrow slot of a door I see sideways on.  
That's all there is to them—all as far as I care ;  
The printed page on my knee opens wider doors.

So reason urges ; but eye, insubordinate,  
 Glances . . . the shutter snaps . . . as barefoot Mercury  
 Lights on the threshold, his ash-root wand out-thrust,  
 A flurry of coat or wings swung in with the shoulder,  
 The flame of an aureoled head—he is seen—he is mine !

Surging of waves was in that shoulder,  
 The wind's speed in the limb flexed hip to toe,  
 Cliff's rigour in the hewn line, brow-jut to indrawn chin,  
 Cloud's freedom in the cape, rayed light in the hair.

Who knows, if a sculptor stepped through the smother of my fire,  
 He might see what I saw, a spark could lodge in his hair  
 And torment him into labour.

## THE OFFENSE OF POETRY

*By C. R. B. Combella*

WHERE there is neither attack nor threat of attack, there can scarcely be a defense. Poetry in our time suffers not from obloquy but from disregard, so that it is scarcely possible that there should be added to Sidney's and Shelley's a twentieth-century defense of poetry. But the unattacked can the better for that take the offensive, and this is meant to be an attack against the disregard of poetry in the modern world. By poetry I mean of course not mere verse and rhyming, but high literature, the very highest of which, like Homer's or Sophocles', comes always in verse ; but that is not to deny almost as great a value to a Plato.

Prose fiction, especially of a low order, and the dramas that move on the screen are nowadays a pastime almost as widely indulged in as spectator-baseball and are, with popular songs, the only kinds of literature generally appreciated at all. The production of these kinds is thought to be commendable, for it

is understood that it is done for money, as tin cans are made and oil wells drilled. The reason for their consumption is generally understood, for people have lives to be got through with somehow, and these help to pass off boring time. But nobody thinks the inane words of the songs are worth serious attention: and since all stories are considered to be more or less amusing sequences of events that never really happened to people who never really lived, it seems to many people ignoble and trivial for intelligent men to devote themselves seriously and professionally to the study of prose fiction or drama, especially as compared with the most respected activity of our scientifically inclined age—scientific research, that high wresting of truth out of darkness for the enlightenment and benefit of mankind. And that attitude shows what people really think of the only kind of literature they do not disregard. Unlike prose fiction, poetry is as we all know caviar to the general; once in a while the puzzle-poetry characteristic of our age may be sampled for the sake of scorn, but the great poetry of the human race goes almost unread except by the idiosyncratic few.

And just possibly the reasons that have been advanced for the justification of literature ought not really be expected to convince anyone not already pre-convinced, for none of the reasons really gets at the heart of the matter.

Let us pretend that all the majority of humanity which disregards poetry might be rolled up into one Disregarder of Poetry, who, let us suppose, has an honest and open mind that would be convinced by sound argument. The basic argument put to him would be the old one that poetry is not an end in itself (which I agree to be true), but a useful means to an end. Two ends, both of them I think basically mistaken, are commonly proposed as the ends of poetry.

One of these is knowledge. We may pass over its effective but minor information-conveyance remembrance-jogger value of the "Thirty Days" sort. It is proposed that the study of poetry teaches an understanding of human nature.

Now it is admitted that an understanding of human nature is good, because it enables its possessor to influence his fellows, even to the purchase of unwanted merchandise. But if the prime object of reading poetry is to understand people, the Disregarder

might ask if it would not be better to proceed more directly to the object and to go among people rather than among books. Can one come better in a library to such shrewdness in sizing 'up as can tell in one deep darting glance whether a man wants of life women or food or the sweet green money, to such sure judgment of men and women as is often developed in the hurly-burly where money moves from hand to hand and from bank account to bank account? And even if a bookish approach to the study of human nature were best, would not psychology texts serve better than the little volumes of verse? Psychology, after all, is the very science of the study of man. Let us leave the Disregarder triumphant for the moment in this rebuttal and proceed to the other value usually alleged in behalf of poetry.

Joseph Wood Krutch says in his excellent biography of Samuel Johnson, "Like most of his contemporaries, Johnson found that when he attempted to rationalize and justify the enormous value which he set upon literary excellence, it was difficult to get beyond the contention that literature is important because it helps to make men virtuous . . ." (pp. 313-4). That sums up a whole attitude toward the question. We may compare Sidney's "For if it be, as I affirm, that no learning is so good as that which teacheth and moveth to virtue, and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as poesy, then . . . ."

The open-minded Disregarder, to test this hypothesis, might make an honest effort to examine the lives of the writers and readers of poetry to see if they are on the whole demonstrably more virtuous than those of other people.

He would, on examining the lives of the poets, find that they have all too often been the lives of dope fiends, perverts, or shiftless wretches. Maybe, even, poets less often than other men are honest and sober citizens, for their insistence on devoting themselves to poetry instead of to useful and remunerative occupations like selling shoes means that the hand of society is ever against them; to get their time for poetry they are forced more than most men to live unfostered, out of favour and not in the sunshine.

To test the effect of much reading of poetry, the Disregarder might ask the Better Business Bureau or their fellow citizens to rate any hundred professors of literature in the country and a like number of professors of physics and again a like number of



plumbers or merchants, and it is surely doubtful that the studiers of poetry would give clear and sure proof of moral superiority. Again, the hypothetical Disregarder might point to the history among us of the idea of the noble savage—noble because untouched by the forces and arts of civilization. Since a considerable number of intelligent people have believed in him, they must have believed that poetry, along with the rest of the arts of civilization, was actually a corrupting and degrading force ; and so the Disregarder has an argument to his hand. Sometimes poetry has been directly attacked as a force for evil, a *vinum daemonum*, filling the imagination with the shadow of a lie. If the prime purpose of poetry is to teach morality, then perhaps a more direct means, such as birch rods, might seem more effective. Should the honest Disregarder really be persuaded to set his son to Baudelaire and Wilde for the training of character ?

Some lovers of poetry say that poetry is not just a teaching device, but a great and positive pleasure, and that all those should be scorned who look always for a practical benefit before they will pay down their time and money. But if pleasure is its object, may not the Disregarder really have justice on his side if he retorts that we are surely wrong then to teach poetry in our schools ? Would it not be true that no stronger compulsion than courteous invitation should urge people toward poetry or stamp collecting or any other mere interest or pleasure ?

And yet all people who greatly love poetry know with a deep certainty that it is more than merely a pleasure, that it is of infinitely greater worth than stamp collecting or card playing or any pastime. They are often sure beyond doubt that it is the highest and noblest of human activities. In every century very many intelligent people—not the riff-raff of society—choose to devote their lives to poetry in one aspect of it or another, writing it, teaching it, criticizing it ; and many more who decide to try to earn richer material livings for themselves in some other way will nevertheless treat poetry as the one best thing to devote their leisure time to. So many people, in century after unfailling century, must be responding to some value in poetry that is really there.

The reason why the value of poetry has never been very satisfactorily explained is, I think, that the question of poetry

has never yet been carried back to a proper first consideration of what ultimately constitutes value of any sort at all. It has, I think, been only imperfectly realized that unconsciously and automatically and by virtue of their nature human beings make humanness their standard of value in all human things. For the gods and for beast creation there may be other standards ; for us, all value is inescapably bound up with some aspect of ourselves.

Consider the way a human being comes to be valued as he develops. He may be greatly valued and even in a way loved—properties may be settled upon him and provision made for his comfort and happiness—while he is still only a tailed creature in the womb ; but it is all only for his potentialities as a human being. Then, born, he is loved partly for what he is, a small and rosy beginning of humanness, but even then it is mostly for the promise in him of human traits. If he were to remain an untalking helpless animal, the love would turn to sorrow. As he becomes able to recognize people and things, to speak, as he comes out of animality and savagery and begins to have good manners, to tell the truth when that is hard to do, to show a recognition of the concepts of justice and kindness, his parents rejoice in the man that is being made, and ever more so as he grows in human qualities. Part of the pleasure is in his physical development, as he grows toward that ideal physical form for human beings, the human form ; and if he fails of it in any way, with a short leg or some distortion, that is a defect to be remedied or hidden if possible. But more important than the physical human form is the gradual development of such qualities as the ability to reason, to see beauty, to use language well, because man is distinguished from the other animals chiefly by such characteristics. The child is inevitably valued, not only by his parents but by society as a whole, in proportion as he develops from animal brutedom to humanness.

The point is that human beings inescapably believe that the ultimate basis of value in all things human is humanness. Whether such human prejudice is egotistical or not is beside the point ; perhaps it is not so much egotism as a just feeling that all things must in their virtues be good each according to its kind. If a man is judging a pheasant, he will automatically judge

it according to its plumage and other pheasantly characteristics. And as plumage distinguishes birds from the rest of creation, poetry belongs to man alone and so constitutes part of his essential distinguishing humanness. Unplumed of his poetry, he must be the less human, as a plucked pheasant running in the fields would be unpheasanted. Individual pheasants develop their quilled and coloured beauty, because it is a physical trait, more consistently than men develop poetry or the love of justice or the ability to reason or any other distinguishing human traits except the physical ones: in the eon-long progress of our stuff from the primordial slime, perhaps the physical shape came first and then gradually the five-sensed human-shaped thing began to develop and is still developing, haltingly and backslidingly, the special kinds of perceptions, the special human senses, which chiefly distinguish him from the unperceptive, non-human animals.

If humanness consists in being different from the rest of creation, then what chiefly distinguishes man is partly the peculiar and human things he does, like verbal argument or cooking; but, even more, what distinguishes him is the development in him of the particular kinds of perceptiveness which lead him to do the things he does. There are, surely, three new senses in him which make him himself and therefore different from the non-human animals: these are the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic perceptions. *Homo sapiens* is in three ways a knowing animal. All of these three new senses depend upon but are in addition to the animal perceptions of the physical senses. The baby human animal feels and acts upon only the physical sensations, and it is only as he develops the others that he takes on humanness.

In each of the three fields of perception which are peculiarly human, we distinguish between what is excellent in that field and what is not: goodness and evil, truth and falseness, beauty and ugliness. And we are so made that to mankind as a whole it seems proper that, having perceived what is excellent and what is not, we should try to follow the one and avoid the other; that is part of the human discernment.

I go on the unprovable assumption that these qualities have real existence and are not mere human imagining; I assume that all of the three special human modes of perception and also

that all of the five animal senses put us in contact with something real. I am convinced that fields of spring flowers and nesting birds do really exist, and hippopotami. Human perceptions of goodness, truth, and beauty are somewhat wavering and confused, more so even than our perceptions of colour and sound, so that we are somewhat less in agreement about them than about what we perceive with the five physical senses. But although two men will hear and see differently and will have also different ideas of beauty and virtue, still they can and mostly do agree that beauty and virtue are just as much there to be perceived as the cracking sound when a great branch of fir, grown too heavy with the down thrust of the weight of winter, snaps and crashes to the forest floor, splashing and scattering snow and sound.

From the three particularly human abilities to perceive, there develop various institutions of mankind and all the various particularly human, finer than merely physical, activities and modes of existence. One of our special human abilities—one of our glories, we think—is that we can perceive wickedness and goodness and difference between them. Out of the moral perceptions develops law; and good and evil are the special concern of religion.

Secondly, we are as human beings particularly curious and so we curiously gather by observation many facts about ourselves and our environment. We do this as the other animals do, but in a higher degree; and then to these facts we find ourselves able to apply first inductive and then deductive reasoning and so come to reason our way to truth. Philosophy and science and other modes of the intellectual life arise out of the human ability to do this. Most of us think that this intellectual activity is good and that the pursuit of truth is, like the pursuit of goodness, valuable in itself. The intellectual life, like the moral life, is right and proper for man because it is human, and he is the more human and the less animal in so far as he lives in his mind as well as his body. We might well recall the words of Housman in his *Introductory Lecture*: "The acquisition of knowledge needs no such justification: its true sanction is a much simpler affair, and inherent in itself. People are too prone to torment themselves with devising far-fetched reasons: they cannot be content



with the simple truth asserted by Aristotle : 'all men possess by nature a craving for knowledge,' πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει."

Thirdly, we are so made that we can perceive beauty. Therefore aesthetic activity is proper to man. Therefore, also, he is the more a man in proportion as he seeks beauty. The aesthetic life rests upon the same basis as the moral life and the intellectual life, that is, upon one of three special capacities of human beings.

People tend to develop unevenly in the three types of humanness, with the result that we cannot judge a man's honesty, for instance, by knowing whether or not he is given to scientific thought. People turn out to be saints, or men of learning, or artists, or all of these things in greater, or especially in less, degree. It is for this reason that the Disregarder of Poetry, testing men known to be highly human in the way of poetry, would not necessarily find a strong positive correlation with the development in them of moral goodness.

Poetry need not have claimed for it a moral value or any other extraneous value. Its existence as a human thing justifies itself. Since man has three characteristically human senses which enable him to perceive, respectively, goodness, truth, and beauty, then each of these three is valuable in itself—for its humanness—and need not depend on the others.

It is true, of course, that the study of poetry does not make a man such a shrewd judge of character as mingling with men may do. He cannot read faces so well, because he has been looking into hearts ; he cannot read individuals so well, because he has been studying not so much the particular as the general. Studying poetry and horse trading are different ways of studying mankind, and a man who would come to a full understanding of his kind should perhaps neglect neither. Poetry gives an understanding less immediate but deeper and wider, deeper because it concerns itself with the deepest feelings, and wider because the poets of the race come from and speak of more conditions of men than any one man can know in his own life. Poetry, just as truly as science, is directed toward understanding, toward knowledge, and, moreover, toward knowledge of ourselves and human kind, which

is more important for people, just because it concerns the human, than knowledge of the stars and storms and physical forces about us. The preoccupation of our age with science must result from a false conviction that truth is more important than beauty or goodness, and only a part of the truth at that, the part dealing not with man but with his physical surroundings; if man is our measure and humanness our goal, that part of the truth with which the physical sciences concern themselves is the lesser part.

So my answer to the Disregarder on this point would be that poetry does teach understanding.

And poetry does conduce toward goodness, as Johnson and so many others have thought, partly just because it does lead to an understanding of man and so to an understanding of the truth that good men are happier than bad men. That many good men do not love poetry and that many men who love poetry are not good merely proves, as we have noted, the obvious fact that many men do not develop humanness in a fully rounded way. But it has been many times noticed, over hundreds of centuries and in varied countries and kinds of civilization, that the love of poetry does have some influence in promoting the love of goodness. This is so obvious that it is widely known even among the unliterary. The hoodlums of the underworld know scoffingly that it is not for them and their sort to gather together to read and discuss the poetry of Keats or Tennyson. College students are known to constitute a group distinguished from the hoodlums and also from the general populace by, at once, a somewhat greater than normal love of poetry and a somewhat less than normal proclivity toward bank robbery and murder. The only thing wrong with the attempt of the literary critics to connect poetry with virtue was the supposition that poetry needed to have its existence justified on the ground that it promotes virtue, when it is really completely and absolutely justified without that.

One reason why it promotes goodness is that great poetry—Homer's or Shakespeare's—is instinct with a sense of human greatness; it is a kind of stretching upward of the human thing to its utmost, and can give an awareness of the human capacity for noble thought and action as well as for noble expression.

Also there is some unprovable, undeniable connection of the excellences in the three sorts we are specially and humanly fitted to perceive, with the result that we often perceive in one object and at once truth, beauty, and goodness. Keats, in his famous dictum that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," was I think poetically expressing this intimate connection. A. C. Bradley in the final paragraph of his *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* puts it another way: "If I may use the language of paradox I would say that the pursuit of poetry for its own sake is the pursuit of truth and of goodness. Devotion to it is devotion to 'the good cause of the world.'"

Poetry, resting its case on the human sensitiveness to beauty, can claim on that basis to equality with, for example, the noble art of architecture or a non-art like physics; but it is more than architecture or physics because it is able, as they are not, to appeal to more than one—in fact, to all three—of the special human senses. It is more truly human than the various arts and knowledges which must perforce appeal more narrowly than it does to one special sense only. It is the peculiar quality of poetry to have a completeness in a human way denied to all things else.

One reason for this is that its mode of expression is particularly human because it is in words, those meaningful modulations of the voice stream invented and arranged to grammar and style by the creature who calls himself, and rightly so, the talking animal.

It also engages, more than any other art or knowledge, the five physical senses of man as well as the others. Addressed to the ear, it owes part of its charm to its appeal to all the physical abilities to perceive. One does not see the music of Bach, or hear Chartres, or stroke astronomy, or taste geometry, but poetry is compact of savorings by all the senses.

And even all this complicated richness of the appeal of poetry to the five-plus-three senses of man does not quite exhaust the totality of its richness and worth. There is reserved for certain things, which combine the civilization of man with his primitiveness, a very particular and wonderful quality which is one of the qualities of poetry. When witty and urbane friends

sit drinking wine and conversing together before the wood ablaze in the fireplace of a well-stocked beautiful library, civilization meets with the campfire of primitive man to an especial charm which could be neither's alone. The *haute cuisine* seems especially civilized because it is art taking and transforming the elementary physical need for food. A good marriage, combining as it does the elementary sexual urge with kindness, with long and forethoughtful cherishing, with intellectual discourse, with art more wholly perceived because of the mutuality, becomes a very perfection of human conditions. So poetry, the dance of words, conforms in its rhythmical alternation to the change of snow and summer, day and dark, effort and rest, blood-beat within us and pulsing universe without; rhythm is older and more primitive in us than sex, being ours from one-celled ancestors who lived in the tidal rhythms of an early sea. Poetry combines in one experience the most primitive thing in us with the uniquely and most completely human of all the high attainments of man.

To the university come in numbers the young bulls and maidens, beautiful and partly human. Humanization is not their desire, any more than to learn to eat with knife and fork was once their desire; they come actually to secure for themselves, in a roundabout way, the simplest of animal needs, food and shelter. Society, being also fairly rudimentary, supposes too that the prime function of the university is to serve the animal man—to turn out students who can devise new sprays for pear trees and new textiles made of coal and air, students, that is, who will work at the job of feeding and clothing us. But the prime function of the university should be to make its students more human, and poetry can do that better than anything else they could study. It offers complete in itself all that is needed for humanization; for those who must devote themselves chiefly to the other disciplines and lesser subjects, it offers the possibility of their becoming whole men instead of lopsided experts. Poetry is inevitably the most important subject the university can offer to students; and, since the two greatest poetries of the human race are written in Greek and English, those are the two most important subjects in any university's curriculum. Any man who fails to possess himself of them fails to take into his hands crown jewels of his human heritage.



# GERALD GRIFFIN'S "THE COLLEGIANS"

By Donald Davie

THE *Collegians* is described by Padraic Colum as "the best of the Irish romantic novels". It is the basis of Boucicault's play *Colleen Bawn* and Benedict's opera *Lily of Killarney*. C. H. Herford describes it by saying "a somewhat melodramatic story of the Amy Robsart type serves as framework for a profusion of admirable studies in Irish peasant character". *Kenilworth* had appeared in 1821, five years before Griffin started *The Collegians*; but a modern reader may think first, not of Amy Robsart, but of Dreiser's *American Tragedy*, the original of the recent film *A Place in the Sun*. And this is fairer to Griffin; for the story of the low-born secret wife betrayed and murdered by her high-born husband is used by Griffin, as by Dreiser but not by Scott, to establish a whole social hierarchy in all its niceties of class-distinction. It is this that gives to Griffin's story of Munster society a sort of depth and density such as we find in *Middlemarch*, and makes it a novel of manners in Lionel Trilling's sense<sup>1</sup> :—

"Such, in happier days than ours, was the life of a Munster farmer. Indeed, the word is ill adapted to convey to an English reader an idea of the class of persons whom it is intended to designate, for they were and are, in mind and education, far superior to persons who occupy that rank in most other countries. Opprobrious as the term 'middleman' has been rendered in our own time, it is certain that the original formation of the sept was both natural and beneficial. When the country was deserted by its gentry, a general promotion of one grade took place among those who remained at home. The farmers became gentlemen and the labourers became farmers, the former assuming, together with the station and influence, the quick and honourable spirit, the love of pleasure, and the feudal authority which distinguished their aristocratic archetypes, while the humbler classes looked up to them for advice and assistance, with the same feeling of respect

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<sup>1</sup> "One of the things which makes for substantiality of character in the novel is precisely the notation of manners, that is to say, of class traits modified by personality." (*The Liberal Imagination*, p. 262).

and of dependence which they had once entertained for the actual proprietors of the soil. The covetousness of landlords themselves, in selling leases to the highest bidder, without any inquiry into his character or fortune, first tended to throw imputations on this respectable and useful body of men, which in progress of time swelled into a popular outcry, and ended in an act of the legislature for their gradual extirpation. There are few now in that class as prosperous, nor many as intelligent and high-principled, as Mr. Daly."

The passage is unfortunately ambiguous, for to the English reader who does not know the Irish meaning of "middleman", it remains unclear whether the Dalys are farmers-become-gentlemen, or labourers-become-farmers. In fact they are the former, as are other families in the novel, the Cregans and the Chutes; and Mr. Daly's assumption of the responsibilities of the gentry is to be contrasted with Mr. Cregan's assumption only of their privileges (pp. 28, 29):—

"But I was speaking," Mr. Daly resumed, "of the family pride of the Cregans. It was once manifested by Hardress's father in a manner that might make an Englishman smile. When their little Killarney property was left to the Cregans, amongst many other additional pieces of display that were made on the occasion, it behoved Mr. Barney Cregan to erect a family vault and monument in his parish churchyard. He had scarcely, however, given directions for its construction, when he fell ill of a fever, and was very near enjoying the honour of *hanselling* the new cemetery himself. But he got over the fit, and made it one of his first cares to saunter out as far as the church and inspect the mansion which had been prepared for his reception. It was a handsome Gothic monument, occupying a retired corner of the churchyard, and shadowed over by a fine old sycamore. But Barney, who had no taste for the picturesque, was deeply mortified at finding his piece of sepulchral finery thrown so much into the shade. 'What did I or my people do', he said to the architect, 'that we should be sent skulking into that corner. I paid my money, and I'll take my own value for it.' The monument was accordingly got rid of, and a sporting flashy one erected opposite the gateway, with the Cregan crest and shield (in what herald's office it was picked up I cannot take upon me to say) emblazoned on the frontispiece. Here it is to be hoped, the aspiring Barnaby and his posterity may one day rest in peace."

There is plenty of this sort of thing, especially in the first hundred pages or so, where the characters are bedded firmly into the social structure even as they are set in motion. And all this comes to a head in the seduction of Eily O'Connor; so that Herford is wrong to treat the story merely "as framework".

" Such, in happier days than ours . . . . "—this belongs to another aspect of the book, again one that is most evident in the earlier pages, the nostalgia that suffuses the picture. *The Collegians* is intended for a historical novel, set back fifty years or so before the time at which it is written ; and the very first chapter, a threnody on the decline of Garryowen, is bathed in an almost cloying nostalgia. This was a characteristic of nearly all the fiction of this period, English and Scottish as well as Irish. Nostalgia of one sort was the inspiration of Scott, and it also explains the ludicrous anachronisms of Lever's *Charles O'Malley*, which is set before the Act of Union yet also in the period of the Peninsular Wars. In the same way Dickens's earliest novels look back with a sort of easy yearning to the coaching England of the Regency. And in Griffin this is so pervasive that we get a sort of nostalgia inside nostalgia. The story is set in the vanished never-never land of Garryowen's heyday, yet one of the characters is allowed to yearn back even further : (p. 46)—

" Heaven be with ould times ! There is nothin' at all there as it used to be, Master Kyrle. There isn't the same weather there, nor the same peace, nor comfort, nor as much money, nor as strong whisky, nor as good *piatees*, nor the gentlemen isn't so pleasant in themselves, nor the poor people so quiet, nor the boys so divartin', nor the girls so coaxin', nor nothin' at all is there as it used to be formerly. Hardly I think, the sun shines as bright in the day ; an' nothin' shows itself now by night, neither spirits nor good people. In them days, a man couldn't go a lonesome road at night without meetin' things that would make the hair of his head stiffen equal to bristles. Now you might ride from this to Dingle without seeing anything uglier than yourself on the way."

This nostalgia is really irrelevant to the book, and indeed it disappears as soon as the story gets under way. A purist may object to it on these grounds. But at least it makes an insinuating introduction ; and in any case, as I have remarked, it is equally present in novelists for whom people make much greater claims than are ever made for Griffin.

According to Padraic Colum, in his Introduction to *The Collegians*, Griffin lost interest in literature after that novel, and never again produced anything so good, because of his pietistic

and didactic prejudices. This may well be. But Colum is too sure of himself on this issue :

“ When he became convinced that people’s feelings should be kept ‘ in the line they ought to go in ’ he was finished as a story-teller. It is because people’s feelings cannot be bounded by the moralist that dramas and stories are possible.”

This may serve as a general principle ; but it cannot be applied without lots of qualifications—or what would become, for instance, of the doctrinaire but delightful stories of Miss Edgeworth ? At any rate, it is impossible to see *The Collegians* for what it is, without realising that, in intention, it was very deliberately didactic.

The very title advertises as much. At first sight, the title is just capricious, for the story has nothing to do with academic life ; but the point is that two of the characters have been to the University, and the story is focussed on this pair to show what use they make of their education when they return to their provincial community. The two “ collegians ” are Kyrle Daly and Hardress Cregan. And Padraic Colum quotes a passage that shows what Griffin intended, in this pair of characters :—

“ ‘ Isn’t it extraordinary how impossible it seems to write a perfect novel ’, he said to his brother, ‘ one that should be read with deep interest and yet be perfect as a moral work. One would wish to draw a good moral from the tale and yet it seems impossible to keep people’s feelings in the way they ought to go in. Look at those two characters of Kyrle Daly and Hardress Cregan for example. Kyrle Daly, full of high principle, prudent, amiable and affectionate ; not wanting in spirit, nor free from passion ; but keeping his passions under control ; thoughtful, kindhearted and charitable ; a character in every way deserving of our esteem. Hardress Cregan, his mother’s proud pet, nursed in the very lap of passion, and ruined by indulgence—not without good feelings, but for ever abusing them, having a full sense of justice and honour, but shrinking like a craven from their dictates ; following pleasure headlong, and eventually led into crimes of the deepest dye, by total absence of all self-control. Take Kyrle Daly’s character in what way you will, it is infinitely preferable ; yet I will venture to say, nine out of ten who read this book will prefer Hardress Cregan ; just because he is a fellow of high mettle, with a dash of talent about him. ’ ”

Griffin is hardly fair to his readers, for it is not as if Daly and Cregan got equally close attention—Cregan is in the forefront of the action all the way, Daly hovers a great deal in the wings. But



in other respects this is probably a fair assessment of how the book affected its earliest readers. For Cregan is the Romantic hero, the hero of Byron and the Brontes, where Daly (the prudent though impassioned) is the Augustan hero, the hero of Miss Austen and Miss Edgeworth; and in the 1820's it was probably true that nine-tenths of the reading-public were vowed to sympathy with the Romantic hero at whatever cost.

For the modern reader it is different. Not that we now cold-shoulder the Romantic hero: on the contrary, I suppose even to-day it is easier to like Mr. Rochester than Mr. D'Arcy—other things being equal. But in *The Collegians* other things are *not* equal. There can be no question of our choosing between Daly and Cregan, or preferring one to the other. For Daly, whenever he appears, is truly “there”, a presence embodied; and Cregan for the most part is a mouthing phantom. There is a fine Brontë-esque set-piece when he is first introduced, at the tiller of his boat in a storm on the Shannon estuary; and in chapter XIX there is a subtle analysis of his bashfulness in society, a trait which distinguishes him from the type and makes him grow for the moment into a third dimension. But his behaviour and his conversation are more usually like this:—

“‘I will!’ said Hardress, setting his teeth, and rising with a look of forced resolution. ‘I know that it is merely a courting of ruin, a hastening and confirming of my own black destiny, and yet I will go seek her. I cannot describe to you the sensation that attracts my feet at this moment in the direction of the drawing-room. There is a demon leading, and a demon driving me on, and I know them well and plainly, and yet I will not choose but go! The way is torture, and the end is hell, and I know it, and I go! And there is one sweet spirit, one trembling, pitying angel, that waves me back with its pale, fair hands, and strives to frown in its kindness, and points that way to the hills! Mother! mother! the day may come when you will wish a burning brand had seared those lips athwart before they said—‘Go to her!’”.

‘What do you mean?’ said Mrs. Cregan, with some indignant surprise.”

What, indeed! It is no wonder if we cannot take seriously a character that speaks such ridiculous fustian as this. Daly's conversation on the other hand, though no less stilted, is less tawdry because less vehement; and the stiltedness does not matter so much, because it is in character for him to be very deliberate and punctilious, like Mr. Knightley or Mr. D'Arcy.

To modern taste, in fact, Daly, who might have been a prig or a lay-figure, is credible and engaging, where Cregan, on the whole, is neither. To some extent, therefore, Griffin's didactic intention is achieved. And since this intention is the elevation of the Augustan ideals of personal behaviour, it may well be asked in what sense *The Collegians* is a "romantic" novel at all.

## II

It is so, of course, so long as it is taken to be an Irish "Waverley". It is so taken, plainly, by Herford, when he applauds it for "a profusion of admirable studies in Irish peasant character." That this is one of its virtues is what no-one will deny. Lowry Looby, Myles na Coppaleen, Fighting Poll o' the Reeks, Foxy Dunat (see his brilliant and affecting discourse on "piatez" in Chapter XXX)—all these are splendid and memorable. But it is part of my purpose to argue that the comparison with Scott is not the inevitable comparison; that *The Collegians* has other virtues than as a gallery of peasant studies; and in general that the book is far richer and articulated far more closely than is generally supposed.

The strongest argument for the comparison with Scott rests upon Griffin's style. In *The Collegians*, as in many of Scott's novels, there is a yawning gulf between the vitality of the peasant's brogue and the frigidity of the more genteel dialogue. In Griffin, indeed, the gulf is far wider than ever it is in Scott. And in the same way, the descriptive writing is more florid and turgid than Scott's. In fact, Griffin's style is sometimes so florid that it is ludicrous (p. 151):—

"Before her lay the gigantic portals of the Shannon, through which the mighty river glided forth with a majestic calmness, to mingle with the wide and waveless ocean that spread beyond and around them. On her right arose the clifted shores of Clare, over which the broad ball of day, although sometimes hidden by her sight, seemed yet, by refraction, to hold his golden circlet suspended amid a broken and brilliant mass of vapours. Eily kept her eyes fixed in admiration on the dilated orb, until a turn in the cave concealed the opening from her view, and she could only see the stream of light behind, as it struck on the jagged and broken walls of the orifice, and danced upon the surface of the agitated waters."

This has undoubtedly an ornate beauty of its own, yet “ the broad ball of day ” and “ the dilated orb ” are things too highly seasoned for even the lustiest palate.

At other times (pp. 415, 416), the writing recalls nothing so much as *The Young Visitors* :—

“ Light and laughter—mirth and music—plenteous fare and pleasant hearts to share it, were mingled in the dining-room on this occasion. Mrs. Chute presided ; the ‘ old familiar faces ’, of Mr. Cregan, Mr. Creagh, Mr. Connolly, Doctor Leake, and many others, were scattered among the guests, and every eye seemed lighted up, to contribute its portion of gaiety to the domestic jubilee. A cloud of vapour, thin and transparent as a Peri’s sighs, arose from the dishes which adorned the table, and was dissipated in the air above. The heavy moreen window-curtains were let down, the servants flew from place to place like magic, the candles shed a warm and comfortable lustre upon the board, and the clatter of plates, the jingling of glasses and decanters, the discomfiture of provision, and the subdued vigour with which all this was accomplished, considering the respectability of the guests, was really astonishing.”

This is babu’s English, neither more nor less ; and one can readily imagine the reader who asks indignantly whether the writer of such passages can be considered as anything but a joke, let alone mentioned in the same breath with Scott.

One answers this in a way by pointing to such vivid and unembarrassed prose as the description of Lowry Looby in Chapter IV. But it is not just a question of balancing the good against the bad. For Griffin is a case that calls for special pleading, just as the babu does. What we have in both cases is an un-English mind trying to express itself in a language wholly foreign to its most intimate habits of thought and feeling. Whether Griffin was bred to speak Irish, I do not know and perhaps it does not matter. For a great deal of the earlier Anglo-Irish writing is of this “ babu ” type. In Chapter XXIII, Lowry Looby sings—

“And are you Aurora or the goddess Flora,  
Or Eutherpasia, or fair Vanus bright,  
Or Helen fair, beyond compare,  
Whom Paris stole from the Grecian’s sight ?  
Thou fairest creature, how you’ve enslaved me !  
I’m intoxicated by Cupid’s clue,  
Whose golden notes and infatuations  
Have deranged my ideas for you, Colleen rue.”

And Poll Naughten rejoins :—

“ Sir, I pray be aisy, and do not tease me  
 With your false praises most jestingly ;  
 Your golden notes and insiniwayshuns  
 Are vaunting speeches decaiving me.  
 I am not Aurora, nor the goddess Flora, ,  
 But a rural female to all men’s view,  
 Who’s here condoling my situation,  
 And my appellation is the Colleen rue.”

As late as 1937 and 1942, Joseph Ranson found just this sort of inspired gibberish still being sung on the coast of Wexford :—

“ Your aid I crave, you Muses ; I pray, lend no excuses ;  
 But in spite of my confusion, my slender quill do guide ;  
 And order a proclamation to state the desolation,  
 And the woeful lamentation that we heard of Malahide . . . ”<sup>2</sup>

“ The eighteenth of December, it was the fateful date,  
 The sky had a gloomy aspect, pregnated with sad fate ;  
 O’er the celestial orbs of light great sable clouds were drew,  
 As in the east horizon a ship appeared in view . . . ”<sup>3</sup>

So far as I know this is a specifically Irish phenomenon. I know of no English folk-verse that at all resembles it. What in the mouth of an Englishman would be the most exhausted of clichés, strikes these Irishmen as a novel and exciting figure of speech, and is used by them exuberantly to convey a genuine experience. Just as sesquipedalian words like “ proclamation ”, “ appellation ”, are used to carry a quite distinctive trailing rhythm with emphatic internal rhyme, so reach-me-down locutions like “ slender quill ”, “ golden notes ”, “ celestial orbs of light ”, are not, as they would be in English poetry, symptoms of slack feeling and listless thought, but, as it were, re-minted and awkwardly alive. To the English reader these stanzas are comic, because they recall English comic verse ; but even to him, if he is at all sensitive, it must soon become apparent these poems have a beauty and an interest not of the “ Stuffed Owl ” variety at all. “ I’m intoxicated by Cupid’s

<sup>2</sup> *Songs of the Wexford Coast* (Enniscorthy, 1948) p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, p. 120.



clue " is memorable, euphonious and haunting, even if it's nonsense.

Now this, I think, is true of some of Griffin's prose as of this folk-poetry. Hardress Cregan's pretentious rant is bad on any account, if only because we could imagine it written by an Englishman. But passages like that on the " portals of the Shannon ", or that on the " domestic jubilee ", with its " cloud of vapour, thin and transparent as a Peri's sighs ", could not have been written by an Englishman, and exhibit a native eloquence making sense and poetry out of a sort of artifice long grown faded and cumbrous in the land of its origin.

Interesting, in this connection, is Carleton's picture, in *The Emigrants of Ahadarra*, of Finigan, the " philomath " and drunken hedge-schoolmaster. He uses habitually a florid eloquence that is ludicrous. Carleton makes fun of it, yet he also makes Finigan the shrewdest character in his story, and sometimes Finigan's language is no longer ludicrous, but truly eloquent.

*The Collegians*, then, is a novel with several grave faults ; but it is a great deal richer, more various and more disciplined than is generally acknowledged. The genre-pictures of Irish life and character are as good as Scott and it contains elements (for instance, of firm and consistent moral discrimination) which are seldom to be found in Scott at all. Moreover, it is Irish through and through, down to the very fibres of style, in imagery, rhythm, and turn of phrase. It is surely not given the recognition it deserves.

## LAFCADIO HEARN

*By Ulick O'Connor*

IF you leave the main thoroughfares of New Orleans, you can slip quietly away into another and older world, hidden behind the facade of skyscrapers and neon lights. Here the streets are thin and winding, and the people move in a world of quiet shadows. Sometimes the sun breaks through, and catches the incredibly ornate metal-work which adorns the balconies of the houses. Antique shops conceal their priceless contents under a

modest exterior, and proclaim themselves the only legitimate trade in streets like these.\* Here and there though, you may catch a glimpse of a bar, where the waiters with pale, solemn faces move like acolytes in the gloom.

Somewhere in these ancient byeways you can find the place where Lafcadio Hearn, poet and author lived. "Ice la che demeura 'Sieur Hearn,'" the people will tell you in the strange patois, a mixture of the French, Italian and negro tongues which is spoken, in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

In this house Hearn lived for eight years, making his living as a writer, but often driven to strange occupations in order to supplement his small earnings. At one period he owned of all things, a laundry, surely a unique occupation for a literary figure. Of mixed race himself, he found little difficulty in mixing and making friends with the native Creoles, who formed about 50 per cent. of the population of the French Quarter. These Creoles had Latin and Negro blood in their veins. They were descended from the Spanish and French aristocrats, who had intermarried with the Negro slaves. Their language and customs fascinated Hearn, and he spent many years in their midst, joining only occasionally in the more exciting life of the modern part of the city.

This strange Irishman was born on the Isle of Leucadia in the year 1850.

His father was an Irish surgeon in the British Army, who had met his wife while on duty in Aegean Isles. She was a beautiful girl of Grecian birth, and they called their son Lafcadio after the island on which he was born.

After marriage, Surgeon Hearn returned to the family seat in Ireland, and Lafcadio grew up amid the brown and purple shadows of the Wicklow hills. The Hearn, the race from which his father sprang were an Anglo-Irish family settled, in Ireland for three centuries. They were a line of intelligent God-fearing men, and one of them had been Dean of Cashel, a Dignitary of the same Church which has given to the World of Letters, Berkeley, Dean Swift and Oliver Goldsmith.

Before long however, Surgeon Hearn's Irish temperament proved at variance with the Latin impetuosity of his wife, and when Lafcadio was seven years old his mother left for England.

As the father's duties kept him almost permanently away from home, he left his son to the care of a rich aunt, Mrs. Brennan. This aunt, an enthusiastic convert to Catholicism, took the boy to England where she brought him up in the tenets of her new found faith.

He was not indeed an easy child to rear. A passion for Greek Sculpture is a startling trait in a child of seven, and Lafcadio's guardians were constantly perplexed at the strange habits of this precocious boy.

At ten years of age together with an enormous trunk of books, he was sent off to Ushaw Roman Catholic Seminary at Durham. Here, despite his artistic leanings, he was a popular little boy, and if his theories were a bit radical, his humour and vivacity assured him of a devoted circle among these future sacerdotes.

One day he announced disbelief in the Bible to the horror of his cassocked friends, but sometime later confided, he was quite convinced of the Divine Origin of the Holy Book. He was a pious youth and a non-Catholic cousin who did not bow to an image of the Blessed Virgin, was severely admonished to do so. Some years later, circumstance made him speak bitterly of the Church of his youth, yet he remained always, attracted by the Latin background of Catholicism. Years after, writing to a friend in Japan, he stated that he considered the ecclesiastical system of education the best, because of its firm discipline and set form.

While in the seminary Hearn suffered an injury, which made him sensitive about his appearance for the rest of his life. One day at play a chain caught his eye, and the subsequent treatment left him with a thin film over the left iris. About this time too his aunt died, leaving him penniless and bequeathing all her money to Catholic charities. The facts are not too clear, but it is probable that the stubborn Irish streak in Hearn's character asserted itself, and he refused to accept the money, which his aunt's friends must have offered him.

Whatever the reason, he found himself penniless in the streets of London at the age of 17. There is a gap here in Hearn's life, during which he probably endured like his former class-mate, Francis Thompson, "the dark night of the soul."

In 1869, at the age of 19 we find him in New York, and then a year later in Cincinnati, where curiously enough he proved himself an intrepid crime reporter. He had already shown promise as a literary artist, but it was not until he moved to the gay, vivacious atmosphere of the South that he was to find a suitable background for his creative genius.

Inspired by the descriptions of a friend in 1877, he moved to New Orleans. And what a city this great port then was. Less than sixty years before Hearn arrived, New Orleans had been a province of France. The society life of the city was still in a line with any metropolis in Europe, and during the season the gracious ante bellum mansions of Louisiana, were emptied as their occupants came down to taste the gay life of New Orleans. The Old French opera house was much patronised, and when the patrons had sufficiently indulged their musical taste, they could slip down to the French Market on the banks of the Mississippi. Here cooled by the river breeze, they could drink the nectar of New Orleans, a brand of coffee still claimed as the finest in the world.

Duelling was popular under the flowing cypresses of Audobon Park, and the city was swarming with swashbuckling, rumbustious characters, some of them immensely rich. Hearn loved to meet and talk with these later day D'Artagnans, and he wrote often to his friends of the feats of the legendary Bob Howard. Howard was the richest man in New Orleans. Once, furious at being blackballed by the Metairie Jockey Club, he swore: "I'll make that place into a goddam grave-yard." To-day the Metairie street car moves smoothly past one of the most ornate cemeteries in the world. On the gateway is a memorial to its founder—Robert E. Howard.

As a newspaper man, Hearn moved in the midst of this thrilling, and exciting life. But another part of New Orleans had already captured his imagination. In the afternoons, when his work at the office was over, he would retire to the French Quarter. Here at last, he had found a people, whose hearts beat in time to the movements of his Latin soul. The hours of evening were spent wandering at random, through the palm-shadowed squares near the old cathedral, watching the passing pageant of the Creole faces.



Hearn was painstaking in the study of these people and he collected with great care a dictionary of Creole phrases, and a compendium of their songs and music. No detail escaped him, and he constantly consulted his medical friends, as to some peculiar vocal tone, or cast of feature which he had noticed during his wallis in the Vieux Carré. He felt that by a careful investigation of all aspects of Creole life, he could eventually place his finger on the pulse of their civilisation. Then he could harness this material to his genius, and create a work of real merit.

This was Hearn's life dream, and day by day, he wrote prolifically, paring and polishing his literary style. Sometimes the very strangeness of this miscegenated race filled him with a great passion, and he longed to follow their civilisation down to the French West Indies, to places with strange exotic names like Martinique, Marianao, and, Guantanamo.

Despite the weight of his journalistic hack-work, Hearn was a faithful correspondent, and in letters to his friends he has left us some pretty pictures of life in the Quarter. In one letter he tells of a female sorceress with two skulls on her desk: in another of Jean Montanet, the Voodoo doctor down the street. "All my medicines is pure water," confessed this intrepid Senegalese: "Don't hurt noone, but if folks want to give me fifty dollars, I take fifty dollars every time."

In a short story called "Dead Love," Hearn was surely writing of his own feelings, when he lay sick of fever in his house in the Vieux Carré. "He heard always the far off drowsy murmur, made by the toiling of the city's heart. But the gold born days died in golden fire, and blue nights unnumbered filled the land with indigo shadows—and the perfume of the summer passed like a breath of incense."

It was while living in this baroque atmosphere, that Hearn wrote his best creative work. "Chita," a novel written about an island near New Orleans is generally acknowledged as his outstanding achievement.

In 1887, his desire was fulfilled, and he spent a year in the French West Indies producing a book, which is a minor classic of its kind. But his hope of a place among the immortals was never achieved. Like many another Irishman, his dream of greatness

was but a phantasy, destroyed by the vacillating character of his temperament.

In 1889, he left America for Japan to do a series of articles for Harper's Magazine. He was never to see his beloved New Orleans again. Always enticed by strange civilisations, the East opened up endless vistas of mystery for him. In a year or two he had married and adopted the Japanese way of life. Soon he had become famous in Japan and eventually succeeded to a professorship in Tokyo University.

But in achieving fame, he had lost what he had prized most of all—his artistic soul. "Pretty to talk of my pen of fire, when I've lost it," he wrote to a friend.

The cold, inscrutable quality of the Orient was beyond his comprehension. Charmed by the kindness and courtesy of the Japanese, he could never quite pierce the veil, which separates, *semper ad aeternum*, the oriental mind from the westerner.

In an anguished letter to a friend, Ellwood Hendrick, he wrote: "Ah, the tropics, they still pull at my heart strings. Goodness, my real field was there in the Latin countries, the Indies and Spanish America. My dream was to haunt their crumbling civilisations getting romances none else could find."

Perhaps when the cold Japanese night was falling, he thought of the old French Quarter, and the tall masts of the ships, showing between the gaps in the houses. These were the magic galleons of his heart's desire, vessels to bring him to the half-forgotten lands of the Conquistadores, where "the sandalled sentinels still cry, sereno alerta, in the night," just as they did 200 years ago.

To-day Hearn is remembered as a literary critic. He has been called the first man to open the field of Japanese literature to the West. How he would have loathed this unctuous title. Instead of a creator he had become an interpreter.

His early work is sufficient to show that he had the seeds of real genius. Had he but stayed where his genius could have flowered, his name might be numbered among the immortals.

Frustrated and saddened, Hearn became more and more solitary as the years passed by. His spiritual perambulations grew fantastic and extreme, and some years before his death he became a Buddhist.

Perhaps here again he was dogged by his racial temperament. Many other Irish literary figures have dabbled in strange religions. Conan Doyle was an ardent apostle of Spiritualism. Yeats dabbled in the occult, while the medieval asceticism of T. E. Lawrence was unique in a world, where such things were regarded as out-moded.

The cold winds of Japan proved too strong for Hearn's weak constitution. For a while he struggled against the climate, feeling the responsibility of his wife and children, but after some years of intermittent illnesses, the end came in 1904. In this year at Tokyo, incensed and perfumed by Buddhist priests, and surrounded by his wife and children, Lafcadio Hearn surrendered his troubled soul.

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*The author was a student at Loyala University, New Orleans, in 1950. Hearn's two best friends in New Orleans were Dr. Matas (who was still alive in 1951) and James O'Connor of the "Item" Newspaper. O'Connor, who later became a Congressman, renowned for his oratory, was a relative of the author.*

## TO GROW LIKE A TREE

*By Luce A. Klein*

**I** THOUGHT of Yvonne. I thought of her for the first time after all those years.

We had been pushed from north to south, from town to town changing houses, names and selves. We had been swallowed by time and glaring images had been poured over us. Dunkerque in flames! Hitler gesticulating with joy over the capture of Paris! The drawling voice of Renaud announcing the armistice! De Gaulle's "eclatante" decision! Pétain shaking hands with von Ribbentrop! The fall of Tunls! We had been swallowed. Our faces had no features left, our minds no past. How could I have thought of Yvonne! How, even when hope came back to us. When we were stitching it with little flags upon the map of the world. It was called Stalingrad, Tunis recovered, the Salerno

beachhead. How could I have thought of Yvonne! How was it possible when the only patches of life we had were lived to the core under the imperative of taking to-day as the last day!

She had remained in the north and the past, when days kept something from yesterday for to-morrow, a long stuff regularly woven from which we had been cut.

Then suddenly, the Americans arrived at last shouting on truck after truck. Laughter and youth and trembling freedom made us drunk. The trains began joining town to town again, the steel zone in the middle of France vanished like smoke. We could go back to the north, to the past. And I thought of Yvonne.

I had had a great admiration for Yvonne, an admiration indeed which many had shared with me. For Yvonne had been a heroine even in the brilliant milieu which enjoyed life in France between the two World Wars. Not everyone had been able to enjoy life like her. She had been the first one to have her hair cut short, the first one to wear silk stockings, the first one to marry three times in four years, and as the saying goes, to live her life to the full.

Her daring smartness, her burning blond hair which she often said was like the "mane of a lion when I was fifteen," her well-made-up face under the plumes of an always new hat were striking in the most elegant gatherings. And she was welcome also in sterner circles like ours, where her abounding vitality shone by contrast with its greatest radiance.

Though she was already a very mature woman when she began to pay us visits and I was only in my 'teens, the dark cold rooms of our house with the too high ceilings and the stiff-backed chairs against the walls seemed to warm with youth and colour from her mere presence.

She always had a world to bring with her in her voluble talk where worlds played leap-frog on one another. She would give us endless news and information about Jean, Kiki, Dédé, Paulette, Odile et Gros Minet whom we were not so very sure never to have met, so familiarly detailed were her relations of them. She had a way of launching words which I had been taught carefully never to utter and in her mouth they were certainly very witty for everybody was delighted. Once she narrated with abundant laughter how a cab driver in Paris had called her "ma cocotte"



and whistled, "a nice pair of legs!" "But Yvonne!" my mother had protested soberly. Yet afterwards Yvonne had been declared at the top of her form.

Like all the young I was dazzled by her. Her brilliance would flatter a thirst for self assertion, her daringness a feeling of revolt against an older and more severe generation.

I wished I could become like her. I tried to imitate her. Posed before the mirror I would dress extravagantly, tried to reform my gait, gestures and ways of speech and swore with what I thought was smartness and wit. As Yvonne did not disdain the admiration even of the younger ones she would sometime give me her advice and encourage me in the special way she had. "You look like a real cow," she would tell me with her accustomed brio. Or "you speak like a peasant," and I felt I had already improved.

But it was not this outward brilliance of hers I envied as much as the taste and refinement and boldness of mind which were almost proverbial.

I would have liked her to guide me on the ways of this real life and I was overjoyed when she asked me to spend a week-end in her manor near Paris.

She had told me one day that she was born under the same star as "le Roi Soleil!" "I am like Louis the XIVth," she said with the ingenuousness she had for saying absolute indisputable truths about herself. "I need decorum, magnificence. I need to spend my life among beautiful things and beautiful people too." And though it used to shock me obscurely it was so positive, expected so little denial that I couldn't help searching my own friend's faces to see if I too had that regal need. It was as certain and universal as those many other statements she made such as: "I hate sugar in my grapefruit," or "I cannot bear wool against my skin," which used to make me feel so inferior and coarse.

It was certain and true. Yvonne had magnificence and when I arrived at the gate of her house I was not disappointed. It was even more beautiful than I had expected.

The plane trees closed it against the vast fields and in this green solicitude the house stretched its pink granite with its tall windows under the soft slope of the roof. A long arm of confidence which held at its end the sharp-pointed tower dating from

the Crusades. Between the two beds of mottled begonias with their tight orange flowers in their thick hairy fans the sand was blond and well-combed.

Yvonne greeted me dressed in her riding-habit, while with laughing authority and her leather whip she pushed away the three spaniels who were circling around her and trying to bite and lick her boots. She showed me the house, whose every room had its peculiar style and had required months and years of planning and search in antique shops, and the true garden "à la Française," which lay flat behind the house with close-clipped hedges of laurel and roses well-tied to their props. Then she changed into a black evening gown which set off her jewels and we dined together each at one end of the heavy glass table while her maid served silently. I could not look enough at the Louis XVth chairs, the Gobelin tapestry, and the gay Dufy over the chimney; and I also admired how able Yvonne had been to maintain the ancient intimacy between master and servant. Later she told me that the maid had had a lover who had left her not so very long before she came to work. "Now," Yvonne said, "Denise is very devoted to me."

When we were sitting in the little salon on the fur of the couch among the silk and velvet cushions Yvonne suddenly sighed, and then began to talk. And as she talked, I gradually realized that my presence did not embarrass *her* at all, but only helped her to talk to herself. It came out as a long ripened speech all in one piece.

"If I had to begin life again," she said, "I would do just the same. I probably suffered, made others suffer, I entered like a bomb into people's life, I stamped on many things, but I had a lot of fun. I've grown like a tree, very naturally." And the words made her face bloom. "I've had my fill of all that came to me. Yes," she said, "you will see that the act of love, the little act has not much importance by itself. It is only when you don't know anything about life that you ascribe much importance to it. It is just a means of living more fully." She stopped a moment in her absorption and went on. "And I've used it, enjoyed it in all possible circumstances. I've slept with all my best comrades and it made friendship better. The only thing is to enjoy. And you can do all you want so long as you maintain

a decent front, good manners," and she laughed a short laugh at her own poetical mood. "And the decorum of a gentleman putting on a tailcoat to dine in the desert."

I did not know her purpose in telling me all that. She probably felt she had a sympathetic listener in me. Perhaps even a disciple. Anyway it was all I ever knew for she left me completely alone to wander in the gardens while she went riding. And a few months later war was declared. . . .

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Now war was over. I was going to meet Yvonne again. Spontaneously as soon as I received her letter I had accepted her invitation. But I had hardly done so than I was afraid. Her image was very clear in me like all the images of the past. But before the ruins of our house I had learned that those clear images would only remain untouched in the back of my mind. And I was afraid to find Yvonne changed.

As I stepped from the train, the image of the little Norman station I had known trembled before my eyes. At the same time I saw the low naked shack which replaced it under the immense sky. But that was an accustomed shock now. All around the fields had been ploughed and the first leaves of the beets perched on their wan stiffened knolls fluttered all over the plain. A burned-out Panzer tank lay in a fold of the ground. The road was still lined with stacks of ammunition cases. It was quiet, and I enjoyed walking, accustomed as I had become during the war to long "excursions." My haversack bounced lightly over my shoulders. The moistness of the brown earth rose to my face and invaded the whole of me, and when I finally reached the village I was disappointed to have arrived so soon. Again there were voids gaping behind walls and holes boring the earth and heaps of bricks and stones still lying on the street. Once more I thought it was more sad to see a half-demolished house—like an open wound—than the desert stretch of razed towns where it was impossible to realize anything.

I did not pay much attention to the people I passed. As everywhere they looked pale and tense. After the rows of little

gardens all made into vegetable patches, I turned into the long avenue of elms that led to the castle when I heard someone call me. It was an old man whose face was somehow familiar to me and though I didn't remember who he was I felt happy to see someone who was not strange. "Really, Mademoiselle," he said with the pure drawling accent of the country, "I'm happy you are back if I may say so." And then I too was very happy to be back. "But," he pursued, "I was not too sure it was you at first. You have changed so much. You have grown too," he added.

He himself had certainly more than changed. He must have sensed the way I looked at him for he seemed to apologize. "I didn't have it easy either," he said. "They kept me locked up for six months. They had heard something about my son in the Maquis." He didn't explain more and muttered concisely, "Les salauds!" At least they are gone!" His voice changed. "Nothing much has been damaged at the castle, Mademoiselle," he went on. "A bomb fell on my orchard and on a tree in the front. But nothing else. They came a few times but they didn't stay long. I don't know. Everything is all right anyway." And as we were close to the gates he hurriedly left me and made for the side entrance.

I took as much time as possible to reach the great gate. And as I walked I closed my eyes till I felt the coldness of the railings, and then with an effort I looked.

The house struck me with more strangeness than anything I had seen since I was back! It was the same. Under the protective trees a confident smile shone on the majestic mansion. It all stood motionless, fixed as behind a pane, behind something I could not penetrate. I shook the stiffness of my raincoat impatiently and removed the haversack from my shoulders. Then I noticed many car tracks on the freshly raked sand. I should have warned her I thought uneasily. Finally I walked towards the house in the little lane along the bushes.

There was a figure in the hall between the two glass doors. A young man was arranging a huge bouquet of lilacs in a white stone urn. His delicate agile hands put the stalks in one by one.



He bent to the ground where more lilacs were spread and chose a branch, looked at the vase and bent again to change it for another one. It was like a dance. I stood fascinated at the door and suddenly he saw me. Very self-consciously I thought of my rain-coat and haversack. "May I speak to Madame?" I stammered. "I'll see," he hesitated, looking at me with disapproval. "She is so busy now with her tea."

And then she appeared herself. Why had I come? What had I been looking for? It was not there. "How much you have changed and grown!" I heard Yvonne say with animation. Had she changed? I did not know. I could not see anything on her features that showed a trace of age, but I could not adjust my memory to her definite mask. "Catherine," Yvonne was pursuing, "this is Paul, my friend. Paul, this is Catherine about whom I've spoken. She has done wonders in the Résistance. Yes, yes, you have, I am sure. Well I guess you must be hungry. You might as well eat with us. It's so difficult now to find things though. I had such a hard time trying to have a decent table."

When I entered the verandah where the party was going on I felt like an owl in the daytime. Through the panes I saw in a glimpse that the garden behind had kept its well-clipped shrubs and well-lined roses. But I was suddenly caught in a sea of fashionable huge hats with fancy veils and feathers and women eating delicately and gaily chit-chatting. Yvonne quickly introduced me announcing, "I want you all to meet my friend, Catherine, who is one of the heroines of the Résistance." After that everyone was bound to have a large smile. But I felt congealed, unreal as if I was going to do something absurd or obscene. Then I saw the table covered with white sandwiches, cakes and bonbons of all varieties. I was staring at all this unbelievable splendor when I realized Yvonne was watching me. I hardly touched anything and pretending I was tired I excused myself and left the verandah.

Later when the guests had departed and we were waiting for Paul in the dining-room where all was in its place, she tried to say something sympathetic "about everything." And she probably saw I was reticent for she hurriedly started to say, "You know, Catherine, you mustn't believe it was so easy here either with all

the Germans around. When we came after the Armistice many things had been stolen, and I had a difficult time of it and we went without many things." And as she continued speaking she informed me of the death of her second husband. He had committed suicide. "I know he had been drugging himself for a long time," she said. "Anyway, it is a sad thing." I wanted to change the conversation. "You know," I told her, "your Denise calls me 'Mademoiselle,' and speaks to me in the third person as if she hadn't known me since childhood. I told her it was so ridiculous since I called her 'Denise.'"

I hardly thought of what I was saying when I looked up at her. She was red with her eyes flashing, and I didn't even recognize her voice.

"So that's it!" she said. "I guess I felt it when I saw you. Well, I don't care what you think outside of my home. But I want my servants to have style and respect and I tell you plainly: don't bring any of those radical ideas here!"

I stood silent and astounded. I could not understand what she meant by this strange confusion of words and more so by the unjustified violence. But I was embarrassed for her and as I let her control herself I happened to look at the Dufy over the chimney, one of the green, red and blue "Paddocks." I suddenly felt that in that very colourful careless world there was a note of uneasiness. The figures of that elegant turf meeting were drawn with such whimsical lightness that they seemed flimsy against the intensity of their background. . . .

She has not changed, I thought, and she cannot bear anything to change, anything to make her change. So she cannot bear me. And though I knew then that I was definitely cut from the past, I just felt pity for her.

Yvonne had found her poise again and sat very straight in the scarlet "bérgère." I do not know what was said at dinner, but I tried not to spoil this desperate oasis.

Paul was handsome in his tailcoat and I behaved as charmingly as I could. Also I left the following day and Yvonne made no effort to detain me.

# DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

By A. J. Leventhal.

THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT. By Jean Giraudoux. Pilgrim Productions. R.I.A.M. Theatre.

POINT OF DEPARTURE. By Jean Anouilh. Pilgrim Productions. R.I.A.M. Theatre.

RING ROUND THE MOON. By Jean Anouilh. Translated by Christopher Fry. Gate Theatre.

THE WOOD OF THE WHISPERING. By Michael J. Molloy. Abbey Theatre playing at the Queen's Theatre.

BERLIN DUSK. By Cecil French Salkeld. "37" Theatre Club.

BODAS DE SANGRE. By Federico Garcia Lorca. Dublin University Modern Languages Society. R.I.A.M. Theatre.

Judging by the unusual concentration on foreign plays by amateur and semi-amateur theatrical societies during the past three months, it would seem that a determined effort, conscious or not, is being made to break away from the stereotyped regional drama normally associated with the revival at the beginning of the century. It cannot be altogether an accident that in these months we have had two plays by Anouilh and one each by Giraudoux, Lorca, Beaumarchais and Paul Vulpis. We have had in addition the first production by a local writer of a play with a Berlin setting. The younger dramatic societies and groups have refused to be daunted by the lack of theatre accommodation and have been storming the garrets and basements of Georgian houses, have burst through a jewellery shop and allied themselves with the Academy of Music in respective efforts to find stage and auditorium to satisfy their own acting urge and house potential audiences. At first it seemed that these groups would be content to revive neglected Irish plays or mount those which they believed to have been unjustly rejected. The tendency, however, now is to discount *sinn fein* policy in drama and to look to Europe for sustenance. Even the richest food will pall without change and so alien corn is imported to add a new tang to theatrical fare and give a new interest to ever increasing audiences.

Pilgrim Productions have concentrated on such French plays as have never before been seen in Dublin. They have collected an enthusiastic band of players who realise that without adequate preparation the most original play must appear insipid. It has been a long time since any work by Giraudoux has been produced here and this company's choice of *The Madwoman of Chaillot* was a good one. There will hardly be—as with Hamlet—learned disquisitions as to how mad the Countess Aurelia really is. Her simple remedy for the pain and poverty of the world is to liquidate the insatiable money-grabbers. The president of the finance corporation, the prospector and their satellites, in the belief that they are being led to oil-gushers, are sent to their deaths in the sewers of Paris. Julie Hamilton

played the grandiloquent title-role magnificently, making up for her lack of *nuances* by her bubbling vitality. Her performance on this occasion was even more impressive than her Madame Alexandra in *Colombe*. Memorable, likewise, was the scene in which she presided over the tea-party given to her three mad lady visitors in which a non-existent poodle dominated the stage more significantly than Harvey in the West End success of that name. The whole caste worked effectively as a team among which mention must be made of Patrick Layde for the ease and poise of his Ragpicker.

The last named actor, however, was not so effective as Orpheus in the same company's production of Anouilh's *Point of Departure*. Confused perhaps by the author's dressing classical mythology in modern clothes and provision of a twentieth century background, he kept an acting foot in both eras instead, as must have been intended, playing straight contemporary tragedy. The inevitability of the doom awaiting Orpheus and Eurydice may be sensed by the audience but not necessarily by the actors. Kay Maher's interpretation of the latter role was more in keeping with Anouilh's conception. She made us feel that this story of two unfortunate creatures who join their lot in the buffet of a railway station and consummate their love in a low-class hotel bedroom, with the inescapable awareness that the idealising of their love cannot be reconciled with the sordid background of their past, was not just *their* personal problem but that of man in general unable to fuse his lofty aspirations with the miserable conditions of actuality. The difficult part of M. Henri, a mysterious stranger who is a link between this world and the shadow world of death, was handled with a powerful impassivity by Brian Cahill.

The Gate Theatre, as I write, is about to embark on the twelfth week of its gay production of *Ring Round the Moon*—Christopher Fry's adaptation of Anouilh's *L'Invitation au Château*. In a setting of a Winter Garden cunningly spilled over into the auditorium we are gradually enmeshed in the farcical complications of the plot. Strangely enough the farcical possibilities were not as fully exploited as might have been expected. This, however, might have been due to a slowness of tempo often found at a first performance. Things certainly happen in this play—incredible things, amusing things, mildly outrageous things, but we are not expected to take them seriously. What serious sentiment there was found expression in tender charm in Helena Hughes as the young dancer, Isabelle, thrown suddenly into a Society whose aristocracy was crumbling as surely as was the butler Joshua, a part played with stooping dignity by James Kenny. Miss Hughes was particularly endearing in the unusual love passages. Faced, however, with a scene—much too long a scene—with a melancholy millionaire (alternately underplayed and overplayed by Harry Moscow) neither she nor the depressed business man got full value out of a René Clair situation in which multitudinous banknotes are torn and thrown into the air to come down in, as it were, a shower of gold on two indifferent people.

Micheál MacLiammoir was happy in his dual role of the twin brothers. He had just the right cynicism for the Wildean wit of Hugo and the softer speech for the gentle Frederic. He was wizard in his exits as the one and entrances as the other brother, but we were a little dizzy until the text revealed his identity.



This was pardonable, for the ladies on the stage who loved him made their mistakes too. Thanks mainly to Coralie Carmichael as the cantankerous aunt in an invalid chair, everything ends with fairy tale happiness. She might, however, for better dramatic effect, have reserved her display of good nature until later in the play. This notwithstanding, she contrived suitable marriages with the divine instinct to be expected from a goddess out of a two-wheeled machine. Evelyn Bowen was engagingly vulgar as the mother of Isabelle. Eithne Dunne stepped vampingly out of Hollywood as a lithe beau constrictor, whilst Sally Travers, as the millionaire's daughter, became really convincing when she tore her rival's hair and proved her proletarian origin.

Michael Molloy in his latest play, *The Wood of the Whispering*, did not carry out what he declared to be his intention in the curtain speech made by him on the first night of the play. His object, he said, was to draw attention to the depopulation of the Irish countryside and to drive the authorities to find a means of preventing the young from migrating from remote villages and leaving them in occupation by the old and infirm. Mr. Molloy is in much the same case as his fellow-countryman who defined comedy at the beginning of the eighteenth century. For George Farquhar comedy was "a well-framed tale handsomely told as an agreeable vehicle for counsel or reproof." Edmund Gosse points out that Farquhar probably meant that the motto for his own drama should be *castigat ridendo mores* but his natural cheerfulness (flighty beaux and swaggering officers) would break out. Mr. Molloy has stressed the fun of the situation to such an extent that the reforming purpose of his play is almost completely lost. At times we felt that so lively were the old boys of the village (Brian O'Higgins and Harry Brogan) that we would frown heavily on any leavening of the age average if it were to interfere with the senile frivolity and leave us with the calculating seriousness of modern youth in its stead. There were moving moments in the play underlined by the pregnant silences of Brid Ni Loinsigh as the jilted Sadie Tubridy and the acting of the sympathetic Sanbatch Daly by Philib O Floinn. Ria Mooney and Vere Dudgeon combined to give the production and setting we have learned to expect from them.

Mr. Salkeld's play, *Berlin Dusk*, produced by the "37" Theatre Club, was well constructed, the characters had line but no real suggestion of depth, the dialogue was smooth without being distinguished and the whole might easily have been worked into an acceptable stage presentation had there been something actual, something impinging on our lives and thoughts in its content. It is not because the background is Berlin between the wars that the play lacked interest (obviously place period and setting have little to do with the success of a play) but an indecision on the part of the playwright as to whether his piece was to be a thriller, a play of morals and customs, symbolical, a defence of a feckless central character, an idealisation of a Palais de Danse professional dancer or a cynical picture of a concierge and a landlady. It was in fact all these things with several other *motifs*, but they did not click comfortably into place in the finished product. The acting was uniformly good.

In the spare setting of *Bodas de Sangre*, as presented by the Dublin University Modern Language Society and in the sincere acting of the players in

the language of the original composition, one was able to appreciate more than ever before the strength and poetry, the simple classical line as well as the lyrical density of Lorca's play. Madre—the mother (she has no other name)—haunted by the memory of a murdered husband and son sees her last remaining son die likewise at the hands of an assassin. A young girl yields to the promptings of her passion and allows herself to be carried off by her former lover on the very day she is being wed to another. Stark tragedy is ever present and can be sensed even in the most tender poetry that pervades the play without disturbing its essential bleakness. The lines of the lullaby are unforgettable:

Nana, niño, nana  
del caballo grande  
que no quiso el agua.  
El agua era negra  
dentro de las ramas.

This was indeed a worthy performance in which the intensive acting of Hania Borodzicz as Madre was outstanding.

## Art Notes

*By Edward Sheehy.*

Whatever the cause the past season has been the slackest on record in Dublin, providing one solitary exhibition in a period of three months. These notes must, therefore, be anticipatory rather than retrospective, since, in addition to the Academy, a number of comprehensive group exhibitions are planned to concur with An Tostal. As far as I can judge from the still incomplete catalogue, the group show at the Victor Waddington Galleries should give visitors a fairly good idea of contemporary Irish art. It will include both academic and modern painters, but with a very definite emphasis on the latter. This is as it should be if only to redress the balance since the exhibition of Fifty Years of Irish Art, which will run simultaneously in the Dublin Municipal Gallery, will, in all probability, lean very much the other way.

Looking through the list of names in the Waddington catalogue one is struck by the fact that the modern school of Irish painting came into being only within the past ten years. Prior to that Irish painting was dominated by a curious romantic academicism deriving from Orpen and the English nineteenth century school and directed by the growing national spirit towards the exploration of Irish landscape and particularly of the Western seaboard. The spirit of the movement had a great deal in common with that of the nationalist literary propaganda of Daniel Corkery and, whatever its shortcomings, did a great deal to overcome the stultifying provincialism which made the Royal Hibernian Academy a very shoddy replica of Burlington House. Visitors to Charlemont House will be able to see that the period did have some solid achievement, notably in the early work of John Keating, whose noble, sensitive and magnificently painted *Aran Fisherman and his Wife* could be taken as exemplifying the best in the movement.

Keating, though he never completely escaped the influence of his teachers, might be said to be the first really Irish painter, that is, the first Irish painter who did not keep one eye on the English Academy. Look at his *Men of the West* at Charlemont House, or *Men of the West* at the Cork Municipal Gallery, and you will realise the forceful energy and breadth of vision which he brought to Irish painting. He was a romantic, as all the poets and writers of the insurrection were romantics. And though, like them, he exalted and ennobled his subject, he was neither preacher nor propagandist. Unfortunately such painting is as much a product of the *Zeitgeist* as of the man, and though to-day Keating is still one of our foremost academic painters, his work, for all its cult of the wild seascape of the West, is definitely of the studio.

Jack B. Yeats should be well represented at both exhibitions, I hope, by some pictures of his middle period. I should like to see again his *Funeral of Harry Boland* or his *Bachelor's Walk*, which suffer so much in reproduction. The work of the late Jerome Connor should also come into an all too rare prominence. He will certainly be represented at the Waddington Galleries; while Charlemont House has a fair collection of his work.

In the thirties modern painting in Ireland could number no more than three or four names. The late Mainie Jellett, a pupil of Albert Gleizes, was an earnest and too little appreciated missionary of Cubism. Harry Kernoff, albeit a titular Academician, was painting Dublin with a harsh palette and a leaning towards angular distortion which was anything but academic. Cecil French Salkeld had returned from Germany with the technique and something of the spirit of Surrealism. The modern painters who will form the bulk of the Tostal Exhibition were practically all unheard of. To-day the visitor will be able to judge the achievements of the moderns of over a dozen painters of maturity and stature. It would be incorrect to call them a school since they recognise no common influence and, like all modern painting, their work tends to be international rather than national. If there be any recognisable trend, I should say that it is towards Expressionism, that is, towards the expression of a personal and poetic feeling about life combined with the maximum technical freedom, and away from Abstraction. In fact there is only one painter among them, Thurloe Connolly, who could be called Abstract at all, and only two others, Louis le Brocqy and Nevil Johnson whose work is predominantly formal. Of the others and most prominent, Colin Middleton is a painter of great emotional intensity and controlled technical daring whose best work is imbued with a deeply religious feeling; Daniel O'Neill has the imagination of a poet combined with a very personal feeling for the sensuous qualities of paint; Patrick Swift is an uncompromising and rather puritanical realist. The exhibition will include also some sculpture by Hilary Heron and ceramics by John French.

The one exhibition on my list takes us rather far afield geographically, if not in any other sense. The paintings and drawings by Gwen Tylour at the Dublin Painters' Gallery nearly all date from her life in India and China. On the whole, her work is completely academic and depressingly safe, rescued, in the case of some of the drawings, by the strangeness and piquancy of her subjects. One oil, however, was really delightful. I refer to *Dressmaking*, which had light and verve and a life of its own. In fact the show was worth seeing for its sake alone.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

T. S. ELIOT: A BIBLIOGRAPHY. By D. Gallup. Faber. 25s.

THE FAMILY AFFAIRS OF SIR THOMAS PHILLIPPS. By A. N. L. Munby. Cambridge University Press. 15s.

Mr. Eliot is accepted by large numbers of people on both sides of the Atlantic as a great poet, and this very comprehensive bibliography is certain to be indispensable to all those who are interested in his work, and especially to those university students who have to be. It details in chronological order Mr. Eliot's books and pamphlets; books with contributions by him (including introductions); his contributions to periodical literature; translations of his work; and a short miscellaneous section. As far as a general reader can see, nothing has been overlooked.

The method of collation adopted is, according to Mr. Gallup, standard practice in America with regard to twentieth century books, and is said to be "simple and brief enough to be easily understood." I do not find it so. I find the method of collation singularly unable to help me to form a mental picture of the layout of the book, and I find the prefatory explanation confusing. We are told, for instance:—

Blank pages (*i.e.*, the blank versos or rectos of printed leaves) are not mentioned in collations because they can obviously be inferred.

The general rule is that when the unnumbered printed preliminary leaves in a volume count up to the first numbered leaf, these leaves are not specified in the collation. . . .

This is followed by a statement of various permutations and combinations of this principle, which, whatever they may be, are not simple.

I take up the only two books of Eliot's I have by me. The first is *Collected Poems, 1909-1935*. Mr. Gallup's A.32. The collation is "191 pp." My instinctive reaction to that is that a book *cannot* have 191 pages. It must have an even number, in this case either 190 or 192. This book has actually 192 pages, the last page being a blank. It has ten preliminary pages—Half-Title and Title unnumbered, 4 pages, Contents numbered, 4 pages, Fly-title unnumbered, 2 pages. The Text begins on page 11. By the ordinary method of collation used on this side the book would unfold before the mind as one read, but with this American system one has to have one eye on the bibliography and the other on the volume itself.

The second book I have is *Introducing James Joyce*, Mr. Gallup's B54. The collation is "146 pp., 1 blank leaf." But the last leaf is an essential part of the



signatures, and the number of pages is properly 148. The gatherings are in eights, but gathering I consists of two leaves, the second of which is the blank leaf [147-8] at the end. The last gathering is I\*, pp. 131-146.

There is also a point arising out of the periodical contributions, 568 of these are recorded. Many of these were reprinted, and we are not told where. For instance, an essay on Yeats in *Purpose* is recorded as reprinted in *Southern Review*. But it was reprinted in book form in Mr. Gallup's B75, and it would not have killed him to put that down, instead of compelling the reader to go through the entries in two infuriating indexes.

P. S. O'H.

The name of Sir Thomas Phillipps is known to every bookman, as that of the owner of one of the most famous of all libraries, especially rich in manuscripts. He was born with a master passion, for books and manuscripts, and in a long life he allowed nothing to interfere with that. He bullied his wife and his daughters, quarrelled with his son-in-law, was constantly and heavily in debt. But, somehow, he surmounted every financial crisis, and bought, and bought.

This volume, the second volume of *Phillipps Studies*, deals with his personal history and his family life, and the story is of the greatest interest. His father, recognizing his son's extravagance, entailed his estate, and decreed that in the event of the heir being a woman and marrying the husband should take the name of Phillipps. Sir Thomas Phillipps' eldest daughter married J. O. Halliwell, the Shakespearian scholar, and after a time he quarrelled with him bitterly, his best years poisoned with the certainty that after his death Halliwell would succeed to the entailed property. But he removed the library to another house, and left it under trustees to his younger daughter and her heirs, with an allowance for maintenance of the library, and amongst other things directed that neither his elder daughter nor her husband, nor any Roman Catholic, should even be allowed inside the door.

Halliwell, or Halliwell-Phillipps, was a character also. He was strongly suspected of stealing books from Trinity College, Cambridge, as a young man, and Phillipps accused him of stealing from him a copy of the 1603 *Hamlet*, one of only two known copies. But he was of undoubted literary ability, and he lived down all charges to secure general acceptance as a leading Shakespearian.

P. S. O'H.

# THE XXVth INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE P.E.N.

By SHEILA PIM.

The International P.E.N., founded in 1921, was one outcome of a general fervour of internationalism after the first world war. The portmanteau title stands for poets, playwrights, publishers, essayists, editors and novelists, in fact for all men of letters, among whom are also numbered translators, since the aim is to promote friendly contacts between intellectuals in all countries. The P.E.N. was not founded as a business organisation, but envisaged co-operation among writers in such non-commercial matters as closely touch the writing profession: freedom of expression and the promotion of opportunities for the free interchange of ideas. Ivory towers for the moment were out of fashion. It was sought to enlist the influence of writers in the spread of international goodwill.

There was in all this an element of starry-eyed idealism, and the material foundations were slender—almost all offices are honorary and subscriptions are small. Yet sufficient co-operation was achieved for the P.E.N. to stand the test of time, and although the Congress we celebrate next June is the XXVth, the Club has, in fact, well passed its quarter century.

The series of annual Congresses was maintained without a break up to the beginning of the second world war, and has been continued since its close. Even in the war years the break was not complete, for two notable reunions of the P.E.N. took place in London. A Congress was held there in 1941, and in 1944, in disregard of flying bomb attacks, the English Centre held a Conference to commemorate the tercentenary of Milton's *Areopagitica*.

Among the many publications of Denis Saurat, *doyen* of the International vice-Presidents, is a work in English on *Milton, Man and Thinker*, which perhaps arose out of this historic P.E.N. occasion. The President of the English P.E.N. during the war years was Miss Storm Jameson. Both of these will be with us next June as Guests of Honour, and also the present English President, Miss C. V. Wedgwood.

The office of International President has been left vacant by the death of Benedetto Croce. The forthcoming Congress will have the responsibility of electing his successor.

This is the first occasion on which a Congress has been organised in Ireland, and we face the fact that this is *terra incognita* to the large majority of P.E.N. members. A sense of our remoteness is conveyed by a letter addressed to "Dublin, Ecosse." We seem to have aroused curiosity and the instinct of adventure, and there is every sign that we shall have a large attendance. Already

early last year a young Dutch poet wrote to ask us for a phrase book of the Irish language, with which we were glad to arm him in advance.

It is something to have inspired the first visit to Ireland of André Maurois, that lifelong student of national character, who years ago created Dr. O'Grady and opposed his "Discours" to the "Silences" of Colonel Bramble. Arthur Koestler may add here a paragraph to the Autobiography of which he has recently published Volume I. Marc Connelly, who writes that he has only had fragmentary glimpses of Ireland from Shannon Airport, now hopes to land on our green pastures. And some of us will be proud to hail a fellow-practitioner in Dr. Erich Kästner, author of *Emil and the Detectives*.

Others to whom Ireland will be a new experience are the Parisian André Chamson, President of the French Centre, a leading French novelist who was also a contributor to *New Writing*; the regional novelist Max Deauville, and Professor Franz de Backer, who are Presidents respectively of the French and Flemish-speaking Centres in Belgium; Victor Van Vriesland, Dutch editor, critic, dramatist and short story writer, under whose Presidency the Dutch Centre is already preparing for next year's Congress; Count Umberto Morra, who organised in Venice the largest Congress yet held by the P.E.N. We expect also the Head of the Arts and Letters Division of U.N.E.S.C.O., Vittore Branca.

Several of our visitors already have links with this country. This can hardly be the first visit of Dr. Edwin Muir. The Neil Gunns often come here, and it is not long since the Dublin Centre had the pleasure of entertaining Sir Compton Mackenzie, one of the most perfect of guests. Joyce Cary was born in Londonderry. Dr. Redcliffe Salaman has lectured here, and since he wrote about the influence of the potato on our social history he may know more about us than we know ourselves.

It has been no easy task to devise a programme that, without being too exhausting, will be comprehensive and touch on as many sides as possible of Irish life. Scenery and the Book of Kells, Industry and the Abbey Theatre, parties and literary sessions, all have to be fitted in. A still harder task of compression confronted the Belfast Centre, which has just one day in which to provide a cross-section of life and letters in the North. But Belfast is undismayed by complex organisation, and the Congress will be entertained there by both City and State. A literary session will be held in Queen's University. Thus all our Universities will share in welcoming the P.E.N. The official opening and first literary session are to be placed in the historic setting of Trinity, and later in the week the President of University College will hold a reception at Newman House.

At literary sessions it is customary to discuss some chosen theme. That proposed for this year is: "The literature of peoples whose language restricts recognition." This has an obvious bearing on writing in Irish, but was originally put forward by a delegate from the Yiddish Centre in New York, and has been supported by the Centre for Writers in Exile.

The first sentence of the P.E.N. Charter affirms that "Literature, national though it be in origin, knows no frontiers," and in token that it values the

national and regional contribution to world literature, the P.E.N. has already tackled the problem of the creative writer in a little-known language. There is a joint publication of P.E.N. and U.N.E.S.C.O., *The International Bulletin of Selected Books*, in which an effort is made to give publicity to works deserving of translation. The recommendations are made by committees of the various P.E.N. Centres, excluding those of Great Britain, France and the United States of America, whose authors are considered to be already sufficiently in touch with the world market. Several works in Irish have been reviewed in the Bulletin. A recent number contained an article on *The Background to Modern Irish Writing*, and it is hoped in a future issue to include an essay on Irish verse form.

There is a temptation for writers of international outlook in any language to cultivate a serviceable, easily translatable style, at the sacrifice of subtlety. This tendency to drab uniformity is far from being among the aims of P.E.N. A foreword to the current number of the Bulletin stresses the need to raise the status of the translator. One thing is already clear: that many Centres beside our own are concerned with problems of language preservation or revival.

So much general interest in the Congress has been expressed on all sides that one regrets that literary sessions can be open only to members. The Press, however, will be admitted, and we may hope that anything of note will be reported. A complete record of the discussion will be made, and may afterwards be published in pamphlet form if funds are forthcoming. This has been done in the case of previous Congresses, and we hope that the XXVth will be worthy of an equal place in the Club annals.

## Obituary

R. N. D. WILSON (1899 - 1953).

Looking through a notebook into which over twenty years ago I copied verse and prose passages which had caught my attention, I came the other day upon three poems from R. N. D. Wilson's *The Holy Wells of Orris* (1927); and reading them with long thoughts for my lost self and for the now dead poet I realised why they had claimed their place there among so many other verses. They were romantic and gentle and well made; they were Irish in the mode to which I had become accustomed; they were from the hand of an Ulsterman of a



generation not too distant from my own who had shed the harshness and stridency and bleakness which I then thought made up the Ulster character; they were the kind of verse I dreamed and despaired of writing myself.

But read again and set in perspective, I now see their obvious indebtedness to Campbell, to Colum and to Yeats; so much so that they seem less to have been written by a man than by a literary movement. Yet not for that reason to be dismissed forthwith, since often the nature of a period is expressed more truly by a minor participant than by a stronger writer distorting the collective *thing* by his personal emphasis.

Wilson's second book of verse, *Equinox* (1937), was no mere continuation or dilution of the earlier strain. It was an abrupt breakaway. It was full of experiment; much of it unrhymed, in varieties of Imagist free verse, in far better blank verse than *The Holy Wells* had promised; even the rhyming stanzas had gained strength and compression: the whole book more emphatically personal, as of a man wrestling with his own experience and emotion. One read it respecting the poet's bitter integrity and obstinate effort, but few or none of the words lingered in the memory.

So I blamed the lack of resonance for me on the alien landscapes against which his effort was set; and used him, now and then, to illustrate the dangers which encompass a good and earnest writer who has lost or snapped his roots, for all the while I remembered that he was a Coleraine man, though he had lived out of Ireland for a long time.

Then when in THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE (April-June, 1950) I came upon his *Elegy in a Presbyterian Burying-Ground* I recognised with mind and heart that the roots had not been severed, that he had come to his own utterance.

But even then I did not know that the pity reached to a deeper level and a richer pathos than seemed to lie in the simple commemoration of his friend and fellow-Northerner, John Lyle Donaghy, in these plain images of ashtree and gate-post. Though I rejoiced in the new strength and subtlety of rhythm, in the strong concreteness of the visual representation no longer blurred by literary mannerism, I did not know that Wilson "himself had made his Covenant elsewhere," or that he too "prayed another and more contentious prayer" than his fathers.

I knew at that first reading, and I know now irrefutably, that this elegy has taken its place in the anthology so long as poetry has power to move in the mind of any Ulsterman, and that the necessity of a poet for a *patria* is vindicated once more.

I met R. N. D. Wilson once only, a small dark man with something of the appearance of a little bird full chested with its song. We corresponded during his long and cruel illness; and I am glad that a friend read him verses of mine which he enjoyed. When he died in the hospital in Coleraine I felt a darkness come upon the day which the tragedy of the Copelands shipwreck has not outshadowed or absorbed.

JOHN HEWITT.

## BOOK REVIEWS

FORREST REID. *A Portrait and Study*. By Russell Burlingham. Faber and Faber. 25s.

The title page of *Uncle Stephen* by Forrest Reid carries a quotation from The Book of Job: "O that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!" and at the head of the first chapter there stands an extract from Woodsworth's *Michael*:

They were companions. . . .  
Objects which the Shepherd loved before  
Were dearer now. . . . From the Boy there came  
Feelings and emanations—things which were  
Light to the sun and music to the wind;  
And the old man's heart seemed born again.

The penultimate paragraph of that strange, beautiful book describes how Uncle Stephen and the young Tom paced slowly up and down the lawn, Tom silent, Uncle Stephen talking of their approaching travels. The paragraph concludes: "They were as companions. Objects which he had loved before were dearer now. From the boy there came feelings and emanations—things which were light to the sun and music to the wind: and the old man's heart seemed born again. . . ." Reid mentions in *Private Road* that, so far as he knew, only one reader noticed that the prose words were a repetition of the quotation from *Michael*, with merely one or two necessary verbal changes. But they, with the prayer from Job, are a key to one principal element of the Tom Barber trilogy, *Uncle Stephen* (1931), *The Retreat* (1936) and *Young Tom* (1944), which together form Reid's chief and most characteristic achievement as a story-teller; an element which is the source of the peculiar intensity of *Brian Westby*, where the relationship is that of father and son, and which is present in one form or another in almost everything he wrote. In his second novel, *The Garden God* (1905), it lost him the friendship of his early master, Henry James, to whom the book was dedicated. "Why," asked Reid, in *Private Road*, "should what had been academically acceptable for over two thousand years suddenly cease to be acceptable because I had translated it out of the world of dialectic into that of fiction?" But Henry James was Henry James and the time was 1905. Later (as Reid said himself in discussing his next book, *The Bracknells*, the theme was treated with a difference, ". . . The protective element has grown much stronger; there is a sense of responsibility, a moral significance, where before there was only the instinctive affection of children. . . ." But *The Garden God* was written before Reid had made his own style and while he was under the influence of Pater; and, although neither then nor later did he ever write with sensuality, there was in the language of *The Garden God* something of a languorous, fin-de-siècle decadence, a suppressed eroticism. Yet, whatever its defects, it was, in its period, a unique and distinctive achievement of which Arthur Symons wrote, "Your rendering of

a whole order of sentiment which is almost unintelligible to me forces my admiration, for you make it credible. The whole thing comes to be a kind of poem." Its solitary French critic wrote of this "episode d'amour grec" that "tout y est pur et absolument platonique." The remarks of these two critics point to certain profound truths about Reid's achievement. Although with infinite labour and patience he mastered the constructive method and the style (a most exquisite simplicity) necessary to his kind of story, he often wondered (as in the person of Martin Linton in *Brian Westby*) whether he was really a novelist at all. Certainly, for all his shrewd ironic observation and for all the realism of scene and character, his best work had to arise from a central poetic impulse and be completed within the scope and atmosphere of that impulse. Such a book as *Uncle Stephen* is essentially a lyric, acceptable only in its totality and in its own very real world of the imagination. Then, that "amour grec" was part of something much more than an academic interest or a conscious attempt to enter an ancient culture. "The Greek Anthology," says Walter de la Mare, "was in his bones." Reid found in the religion, the attitude to nature, of the classical Greeks, the very climate of his affections, the air he had to breathe if he was to be happy. He was not unaware of darker implications and, like all whose emotions move close to the natural world about them, he had melancholy for his frequent companion when there was no beloved friend at hand to share his mood. "The creed accepted, accepted from Socrates, and never to be abandoned, is that the only thing we *can* love is the good." But he stopped short of Socrates, holding as he did that affection was not the way to a higher good, a more perfect happiness. For Reid, human affection *was* itself the good, beyond which he could neither imagine nor desire a better. François Mauriac told him that he found in his spiritual and mental outlook "le vide effroyable que creuse dans les êtres, l'absence de Dieu"; yet Reid in his pagan creed of faithfulness, kindliness, friendliness with man and beast and flower, in his very real innocence, was happier than most living men. He would not, and could not, accept Christianity and the atonement. They promised him nothing comparable to the "laetitia," the free full functioning of body and imagination, in his own special world. It is this special world and the attempt to recover it which is the second of the three principal elements in his creative work. The third is inseparable from it,—his interest in the supernatural, in a life behind our daily life, in the workings of the dream-consciousness.

It was with the writing of *Apostate* (1926) that Reid discovered his individual style and came fully to realise his own capacities and limitations. It is a classic, one might almost say *the* classic, autobiography of youth. Reid recognised his "King Charles's head—the point where a boy becomes a man." He was never tired of telling young writers who asked for advice to stick to what lay within their experience and, after *Apostate*, he himself did not try again to go outside his own emotional sphere,—the world of youth and his relationship to that world. Perhaps no other writer has ever so truly and actually written from within childhood and adolescence and to do this he required a particular atmosphere. The later novels are drenched in the sunshine of remembered youth. In the beautiful opening of *Apostate* he speaks of the "primary impulse of the artist" as springing from discontent, "that same divine homesickness, that same longing for an

Eden from which each one of us is exiled," and goes on to say that, however it may differ for each of us, "It is a country whose image was stamped upon our soul before we opened our eyes on earth, and all our life is little more than a trying to get back there, our art than a mapping of its mountains and streams." With him that country persisted through childhood, and not only in dreams, and his work has been in one sense a pretext "for the author to live again through the years of his boyhood." In concentrating so closely upon his own beloved country of the spirit, Reid left whole continents of human experience and human endeavour untouched both in his creative work and in his appreciation of art in general. But what he did he did beautifully and what he appreciated he knew intimately.

In one who knew the man and who knows his work the sight of a large book about him may well arouse a kind of trepidation. The man was so natural, knew himself so well, was so uncompromisingly honest, so mischievously simple; his work was so special in its sympathies, so delicate and yet so virile in its creation of its own atmosphere, that one instinctively shrinks from watching him and his achievement subjected to the type of psychological and 'explicatory' criticism so popular on both sides of the Atlantic. But any such fears are quickly dispelled by Mr. Burlingham's preface. "Few men," he says, "have understood themselves better than Forrest Reid—*Apostate* and *Private Road* make that sufficiently clear—and there is small evidence, either in his books or in the reports of his friends, that an interpretation of his character in the light of Freudian or Jungian theories would produce any useful or significant additions. . . ." In estimating Reid's achievement he follows Saintsbury's implied precept: "Enthusiastic appreciation of letters is the highest function of criticism." But sympathy does not blind him and he stresses the limitations of Reid's work both creative and critical. His book deserves the praise given to it by Reid's life-long friend, Walter de la Mare, in an affectionate introduction, for it does, indeed, show "insight, understanding, courage, candour, enthusiasm and true affection."

Forrest Reid's work is gradually becoming better known. He has been called "the first Ulster novelist of European status." The phrase, as Mr. Burlingham says, could "prove a misleading one to those unfamiliar with his work. For surely no novelist of comparable power and originality ever took as his chosen material experience drawn from so limited a field." It is indeed fortunate that this first full length estimate should have been undertaken by a writer endowed with the intelligence, the sympathy and the blessed sanity it required. Mr. Burlingham says that he did not find his study an easy one to write: he could hardly have written it better.

W. P. M.

PURITY OF DICTION IN ENGLISH VERSE. By Donald Davie. Chatto and Windus. 14s.

To derive the proper enjoyment and benefit from Mr. Davie's book it is essential to bear in mind certain very important qualifications which he makes as to the kind of poetry to which his theories of poetic diction apply and the kind of judgment arrived at by their application. Most important, perhaps, is



this one: "I do not offer the notion of purity in diction as an ultimate criterion of the worth of poetry. I know some valuable poems, especially of the nineteenth century, which suffer, as I think, from an impure diction; and I regret the discomfort which this causes, while admitting a counter-balance of virtues (that is, useful pleasures) of another order or another kind. Again, I find many great poems to which the notions of purity or impurity in diction seem merely irrelevant." Hopkins and Shakespeare are poets of whom Mr. Davie admits it would be ridiculous to say that they use a diction, because one feels that they "could have found a place for every word in the language." But there are other kinds of poets with whom one feels that a selection is continually being made and that certain words are deliberately excluded from the poems. These considerations "justify us in talking of the language of the one kind of poet, and the diction of the other kind, of the poetry of the one and the verse of the other." Logically one would, then, be justified in assuming that the work with which Mr. Davie is concerned is all verse and no poetry and, while it is not necessary to make so drastic a distinction, it is necessary, as has already been said, to bear these primary qualifications constantly in mind if one is to read this study with fairness. For he does not often recur to them and, if once they are forgotten, one tends to understand by his use of such words as 'vicious,' 'impure,' 'unchaste' a criticism of language instead of diction, and to take his neglect of so much of the greatest poetry as arising from contempt instead of from the fact that it simply has no relevance to his subject. "It seems to follow," he says, after a discussion of economy of metaphor as a source of strength in statement, "that if we want to find in English 'the perfection of a common language' (and that is a good definition of pure diction) we should look not among our great poets, but among our good ones." Elsewhere, too, one arrives at the seeming paradox that a 'great' poet may fail to be a 'good' poet: but the paradox is apparent, not real, for the great poet is beyond range of the terms 'good' or 'bad' in their special application. Mr. Davie argues with subtlety and scholarship in support of the theories he puts forward in explaining to himself and to others the varied pleasures which the pure diction of his chosen eighteenth century poets afford to one "who has learned to love chastity." Naturally he is more successful in dealing with some of the real or alleged merits of his examples than with others. It is doubtful whether all his persuasiveness will do much to remove the discomfort which as he admits most modern readers feel in the presence of such words as 'grove' to denote all assemblies of trees and 'gale' to denote all movements of air or of such personifications as Scorn, Anger, Sloth. Such uses are surely far from 'the perfection of a common language' and far from examples of the nice discrimination which is one of the glories of the diction of his poets in others of its uses. Nor will the modern reader readily surrender his pleasure in epithets written "with the eye on the object" for appreciation of "those that turn their backs upon sense experience and appeal beyond it, logically, to known truths deduced from it." Mr. Davie gives sound philosophic reasons for these generalisings and quotes some triumphant examples, but in bad poets and even in good ones, they became all too often mere conventions of literary usage. Most valuable to critic and practising poet alike are the pages on the strength of the naked verb, the transfer of adverb to epithet, and, above all, that apt opposition

which forces the reader to consider the exact meaning of each word. This nicety has been too much neglected. To study it in the best writers must bring pleasure and profit and a powerful aid to the 'purification of the language of the tribe.' Lack of space prevents more than a mere reference to Mr. Davie's later chapters in which he applies his principles to some later poets—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Hopkins and Landor. These chapters, like the earlier ones, are written with force and ingenuity and something more which may be described as devotion, in the sense of close attention, intimate attachment, to the actual text of the poets. Perhaps it is its very unexpectedness which gives a peculiar impetus and brightness to *The Classicism of Charles Wesley* in the first part of the book. Certainly it is a charming and subtle example of literary advocacy.

W. P. M.

UNAMUNO. By Arturo Barea. *Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought*. Bowes and Bowes. 6s.

LORCA. By Roy Campbell. *Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought*. Bowes and Bowes. 6s.

It is related of Unamuno that he was present at a performance of García Lorca's *Yerma*. When the play was over he turned to the author and said: 'That is the work that I should like to have written.' The appearance together of these two short monographs in the elegant little series, *Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought*, is not inopportune. The Andalusian poet much admired the great Basque philosopher, who was, for him, *el primer español*. In his writings each man was almost everything the other was not, yet in the essentials of their nature they were very close. As with so many Spanish writers and artists (not only the mystics), the motive impulse of their work was strongly intuitional. They felt a compelling personal need to establish direct contact with the transcendent mysteries, without the intermedia of systems, without substitutes. Whatever system there is in Unamuno's thought, it comes afterwards.

Interest in Unamuno has quickened again over the last few years since it was discovered that he was an Existentialist *avant la lettre*. He was indeed an admirer of Kierkegaard; but his philosophy was intensely Spanish. Because it was this, it started with the man of flesh and blood, and not with any abstract philosophical jentiy. And because it was concerned with the man of flesh and blood it was concerned with himself, since that was the only being he could ever hope to begin to know. As Mr. Barea remarks, such a writer can 'grow to universal significance through exploring his own mind, and the mind of the nation with which he finds himself identified.'

Unamuno's writings are full of surface contradictions and shifts of direction, but the deep strong currents are constant. Mr. Barea in his excellent essay steers us smoothly and dexterously along. He cuts through the tide rips (the 'zigzags' of Unamuno's thought) and keeps us sailing steadily with the main stream. This study is chiefly exposition, and its brevity has meant that a lot is left out, but the

selection is on the whole judicious. As an introduction it is admirable and it will surely have performed its right function if, as I think it will, it stimulates the reader to read, or re-read, Unamuno.

Mr. Campbell is rather less successful in fitting his monograph into its awkward length. He talks entertainingly about Lorca and a few of his own Spanish adventures. He tells us something of the Spanish background and the folk tradition of Andalusia, something of Góngora and of the Arabic poets. His approach is refreshingly unacademic for the most part and his familiarity with Spain and Andalusian life, together with his own poetic gifts and his experience as a translator, make him a person well-fitted to expound the beauties and the mysteries of the Spaniard's poetry. Unfortunately, the superposition of a *sort* of a method on his material is unsatisfactory. Mr. Campbell runs in a desultory fashion through the principal collections of Lorca's verse, omitting a good deal, as was inevitable, but sometimes in a way that is actually misleading. And the plays of the one great Spanish dramatist of this century, dramas with a reputation in two hemispheres, receive a bare two and a half pages out of seventy.

Nevertheless, Mr. Campbell, as a poet, has an advantage over all the other critics of Lorca who are not. He well communicates some of the subtleties and beauties of Lorca's verse. In particular, he points to the studious art that lies behind his simple-seeming ballad forms. Some of the allusions to things Andalusian he explains in his comments or in the English renderings of the Spanish poems. He gives just a hint, too, of the direct source of inspiration of the greater part of Lorca's imagery, the concrete things the poet *saw* around him and wove in with the fabric of his emotions. The translations, which make up a large part of the book, are the best things in it. They are obviously a labour of love, and if sometimes less felicitous than Mr. Campbell's translations of St. John of the Cross, they are much more so than any other English renderings of Lorca that I have seen.

Slowly, at last, political partisanship is disappearing from Lorca criticism. Alas! not yet entirely. Mr. Campbell deals with the Red bogey in his own energetic fashion—a little as though he were throwing a steer or biting an octopus between the eyes. Lorca was certainly not a 'Red,' but to interpret the 'Ballad of the Civil Guard' (many of whom were no doubt the good chaps Mr. Campbell says) as a parody of the gipsies' hatred for that body is not credible and shows a failure to comprehend just what it stood for in Lorca's mythology. Moreover, Mr. Campbell's own translation conveys no hint that such a parody was intended. No: as Mr. Campbell rightly says in his opening words, the worth of Lorca's work has 'transcended all political emotions.'

EDWARD C. RILEY.

THE SUN DANCES AT EASTER. By Austin Clarke. Andrew Melrose. 12s. 6d.

In his play *Yerma*, García Lorca took for theme a woman's obsessive desire for a child. She murders her impotent and indifferent husband; but a submissively-accepted code makes Yerma condemn herself as the killer of the child she will never have. *The Sun Dances at Easter*, with its wit and gaiety, may seem wholly remote from that tragedy set in the Spanish landscape; yet there is a curious



affinity between the play and Mr. Clarke's fantasy. In both, the poetic imagination makes a pattern of the conflict between Christian and pagan beliefs in a woman's sensual world, and elaborates the design with natural and supernatural motifs. If Orla is without Yerma's passionately brooding intent, and her pilgrimage to St. Naal's Well a journey in search of romance as much as motherhood, and miracles to drift to her hand, the book, delicate, mocking, astringent, explores the theme with a freedom and irony denied to the searing statement of *Yerma*.

Orla, accompanied by her robust maid Blanaid, meets on the way to the Well a young scholar called Enda. He might almost—though agreeably transformed—be the husband she has left behind: younger, handsomer, learned, chivalrous and entertaining. In two eloquently narrated tales describing the exquisite temptations devised to overcome the poets and recluses of this world, and also those that bring the earthiest of humiliations, he shows Orla that her own desires are encouraged not, as she had supposed, by a genial saint but by the same beguiling supernatural power that haunts his stories. If Orla is startled, she and Enda are resigned to sharing the frailties of mankind.

The dreamlike quality of the tale about Eithne and the young monk Ceasan, the wonderfully vivid, grotesque account of Congal turned into a goat, the floating legendary world, the intricate interplay of the lyrical, the profane and the ironic, make an enchanting book that may justly be regarded as a notable addition to contemporary Irish literature.

ADVENTURES OF AN IRISH BOOKMAN. A Selection from the Writings of M. J. MacManus. Edited by Francis MacManus. The Talbot Press. 9s. 6d.

Mr. Francis MacManus, in the preface to his selection from the writings of M. J. MacManus, gives a delightful portrait of the man: the book collector taking down from their shelves with long careful fingers his cherished books and pamphlets, talking of them as only the lover can talk, and lending them eagerly to those who shared his tastes. But MacManus was also a great patriot and a man memorably generous and modest, of wide and gentle sympathies, and his collecting was more than bibliomania: through his books he lived intimately with all that was tragic and courageous in Ireland's history.

This volume of articles and broadcast talks is divided into three parts: 'Men of Action,' including sketches of Dr. John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam, Wolfe Tone and Wilfred Blunt; 'Men of Letters,' discussing Shaw's boyhood, Lady Gregory, A.E., James Clarence Mangan and George Moore; and 'Easter Week,' a series of passionately proud tributes to the leaders of "an end and a beginning—the end of a dark chapter and the beginning of an era that was as glorious as it was terrible."

MacManus is described as "one of the best journalists that Ireland has ever had"; and here one sees how swiftly he could hold the attention of his readers, how admirably communicate his learning, his reverence for liberty and justice, his fervent appreciation of Irish patriots and poets. The limitations imposed by the circumstances of his work only add weight to the editor's regret that he did not write what would have been a distinguished book on his experiences as a book-collector in Ireland. As it is, his integrity, quality, and engaging personality are obvious in these pages.



THE PAST HALF-CENTURY IN LITERATURE. A Symposium. The National Council of Teachers of English, Chicago. Ninety cents.

This symposium presented before the Ohio College English Association in 1951, and now published as a pamphlet, outlines literary trends and achievements in this century.

Professor W. Havighurst traces through the work of writers like Crane, Dreiser, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Wolfe and Faulkner the development of the novel from its first rebellion against the confident materialism of the 1920's, its concern for social problems enlarged to include a cultural consciousness, till now it presents "the drama of men trying tortuously to pass from the self-sufficiency of home, community and nation to the vast interdependence brought upon them by modern science and machinery." Professor J. C. Ransom examines characteristic poetic effects: "an unusual mastery of strong imaginative idiom, marked no less by its abhorrence of the fixed meters than by the imaginative quality itself," a religious diffidence, extreme condensation; and offers a list of poets, British and American, who should survive as the major or minor poets of the period. The survey of criticism by Professor C. M. Coffin is mainly devoted to the New Criticism. He refers to and refutes objections that it is 'intellectualist' limited and stultifying; and suggests that, stemming from our scientific culture, it stresses "the prime importance of literature, as it has been framed in the contemporary situation." In the section on American drama, Professor W. S. Clark discusses the interest in presentational rather than representational drama, and argues that in seeking cultural maturity American dramatic art is responsible for a vigorous and stimulating movement: eclectic experimentalism. Professor R. D. Altick surveys the achievements of literary scholarship and urges: "We have brought together tremendous quantities of building materials, but for the most part they are lying about in meaningless heaps. It is time now to stop hauling still more material to the site. Instead we should take account of what we have, and put them to the architectural use to which they are destined."

These contributions and the discussions of them are very able and highly interesting papers.

JEREMY TAYLOR. By Hugh Ross Williamson. Dennis Dobson. 15s.

Mr. Ross Williamson has chosen for frontispiece to his book the portrait of Jeremy Taylor that prefixed the second volume of *Ductor Dubitantium*. "The 'comeliness' was that of an age which, essentially, approved the florid but was on the road to sensibility. The face, ruddy, full, with broad high forehead but with the chin falling away slightly under the avid lips, might have belonged to a Borgia pope; though the large and luminous eyes, wide-set in an almost sentimental gaze; the straight nose; the sparse moustache, contradict both the period and the power. There is no trace of melancholy or asceticism . . . he might, dressed differently, have taken his place without incongruity among the writers

of the Restoration court." Whether one agrees with that description or not, it is astonishing to find the *Ductor Dubitantium* thus dismissed:

"The book on which Taylor assumed that his reputation would rest is now of little value to anyone. It is as useless to the casuist of to-day as it is tedious to the general reader . . . and, since Taylor rejects the Catholic basis of a systematic moral theology, even much of its enunciation of general principles are that of an eccentric and parochial work."

In the preface, Mr. Ross Williamson says that his book is not a new life or evaluation, but a study of the writings in relation to Taylor's background, and, having consulted "only secondary sources," he "cannot claim unimpeachable accuracy" in certain details. His appreciation of the marvellous prose, its exquisite cadences betraying the chastened but still ardent temperament, and his account of that frustrated career from the brilliant first public occasion to its chill close, make this study a useful introduction; but will barely mollify the reader who notes the disparagement that often marks the treatment and analysis. The book interprets the procession in the great funeral sermon preached by Taylor's friend, George Rust: the precocious boy; the young angel descended to the pulpit in St. Paul's; the new star near the Archbishop of Canterbury; the chaplain to Charles I and the loyal courtier; the afflicted wanderer; the saintly and learned prelate; the famous writer. It adds a more intimate picture: "Jeremy with his need for love, his dependence on the warmth of friendship, his enthusiasms of the moment," and his household; and its consideration of the writings is at times illuminating.

BERKELEY. Philosophical Writings. Selected and edited by T. E. Jessop. Nelson Philosophical Texts. Nelson. 10s. 6d.

This volume of the Nelson Philosophical Texts, designed primarily for use in universities, contains almost the whole of the two major works, *Principles* and *Three Dialogues*, and, in addition, much of the *Essay of Vision* and *De Motu* (in translation), of *Alciphron* to illustrate Berkeley's ethical criticism, and passages of *Siris*. "What he willed to us in the first flush of his career is not altered by any late codicil, for *Siris* is not a codicil, but the same will rewritten with an ornament of antique learning, a mood of deepened humility, and a speculative vision tinged with an unwonted mysticism."

Professor Jessop's outline of the Berkeleian system, a persuasive piece of writing, reminds us that Berkeley was not "simply a Lockian trying to improve on his master"; but that his labours to rescue science from the intemperate zeal of those who proclaimed the doctrine of determinism with all its materialistic implications, and his positive contribution to philosophy, mark him as a great and enduring thinker. The choice of contents and the careful editing provide an invaluable introduction to Berkeley's works; and, especially, in view of the approaching bicentenary commemoration of his death, an illuminating and most welcome book for the general reader.

EDMUND SPENSER. By W. L. Renwick. Cambridge University Press. 2s. 6d.

The R. A. Neil Lecture delivered at Pembroke College in 1952 by Professor Renwick as part of the celebration of the fourth centenary of Edmund Spenser's birth is a distinguished tribute. Spenser has been of late years so amply the subject of English and American historical scholarship that the reproach to literary criticism is of particular interest: "Why has so little been heard of Spenser from our recent critics? Why has he lost the position he held so long, of being one of the obvious, necessary points of reference and judgment in any discussion of English poetry?" The reasons suggested are many, but it is emphasized that "between Hazlitt's self-indulgence and Arnold's austerity—Hazlitt's refusal of Spenser's criticism of life and Arnold's rejection of the terms in which Spenser conveyed it—later critics both of life and of literature have for the most part felt themselves absolved from the task of evaluating or even examining it." To these he adds the facile labels attached to Spenser's philosophical purpose and to his proposed solution of the Irish problem (Professor Renwick has referred elsewhere to *A View of the Present State of Ireland* as "the most misrepresented, because the least read, treatise ever written by a major poet"). If it is tempting to escape the many allusive difficulties in Spenser and the tracing of *The Faerie Queene's* allegorical design, and content oneself with the exquisite verbal music, we are here reminded that "to alembicate Spenser, or relegate him to the ivory tower so tiresomely conspicuous in our critical landscape, we are only refining upon Hazlitt's error, for to isolate 'bits and images' and neglect content is to deny Spenser's basic assumption . . . about *The Faerie Queene*."

The limits imposed by a lecture do not permit of more than brief refutation of the charge of contradiction inherent in the poet; or of consideration of his stay in Ireland; or frustrations; but it is claimed:

"in danger and weariness and the distraction of officialdom the Shepherd followed his quest as his Knights followed theirs, until the tragic end, when he died of sheer exhaustion, trapped in the political ambitions of great men. . . . There is no more gallant effort in the whole history of the world's poets. Nor was it without reward: The reward he himself would claim"—

and Professor Renwick quotes the lovely lines on "wise words taught in numbers" that end:

Ne may with storming showers be washt away,  
Ne bitter breathing windes with harmfull blast,  
Nor age, nor enuie shall them euer wast—

AUGUSTAN SATIRE. By Ian Jack. Cumberledge, Clarendon Press. 18s.

In *Augustan Satire* Ian Jack analyzes several representative satires written between the Restoration and the middle of the eighteenth century with special attention to the various "levels of style," "intention and idiom," that is, the forces, critical and personal, which influenced the poets to write in different ways. When he passes judgment on the poems it is in the poets' own terms. He states explicitly, "All generalizations about Augustan satire, or about Augustan poetry

in general, which ignore differences of intention and kind are likely to be invalid." The main point of the book is not to investigate thoroughly the various modes used by the poets of the period but to emphasize the "richness and variety of conception that may be found within what is usually regarded as a single poetic mode: Augustan satirical verse," and secondly, to indicate how the modes were a heritage from the Renaissance, of which the Augustan age is the final phase. These points are made convincingly.

This is an example of what may be called classical literary criticism and it has been challenged by critics who ask, as least hypothetically, "What has intention to do with the value of a work now?" This can best be answered by saying that when this classical criticism is successful, and *Augustan Satire* is very successful, it brings to works of the past a peculiar freshness and vigour, as if the modern reader were reading them when they were first produced.

The satires Ian Jack examines in turn are *Hudibras* as representative low satire, *McFlecknoe* and *The Rape of the Lock* as examples of the mock-heroic, *Absalom and Achitophel* as a witty heroic poem, Pope's *Moral Essays* and *Imitations of Horace* as examples of "satire . . . of the comick kind," *The Vanity of Human Wishes* as an example of "tragical satire," and for an example of satire which fails because Pope was unsure of his intention there is the *Dunciad*.

Ian Jack writes with the rare combination of compression and erudition and his comments on the satires are acute and comprehensive, primarily in terms of Augustan criticism. This approach can be rewarding. For example, considering Pope's imitation of the *First Epistle of the Second Book* of Horace, which is directed to George II,

While You, great Patron of Mankind, sustain,  
The balanc'd World, and open all the Main;  
Your Country, chief, in Arms abroad defend,

At home, with Morals, Arts, and Laws amend;

Ian Jack comments, "Instead of simply adopting the tone of the original (directed to Augustus), he turned it to irony; so that the opening of the poem and a number of other passages are examples of what might be termed the mock-heroic-epistolary style. . . . A passage in the epistle to Arbuthnot comes to mind: 'One dedicates, in high Heroic prose / And ridicules beyond a hundred foes.'"

The scholar will find this work to be the most thorough and enlightening study of this aspect of Augustan criticism to appear; the more casual reader will perhaps find such a concentration on criticism makes the work too specialized. With few exceptions the sources are drawn from the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries and particularly from criticism of those periods. Some modern scholars such as the late Norman Ault and Louis I. Bredvold, to name only two, who have contributed greatly to the understanding of the Augustan poets and their period are absent from the index.

Many works are needed to understand the poetry of the Augustans, and *Augustan Satire* is assuredly one of them.

W. H. VAN VORIS.



TO THE HAPPY FEW. Selected Letters of Stendhal. John Lehmann, 1952. 21s.

One opened this book with a thrill of anticipation. One recalled vividly the intellectual excitement of reading *De l'Amour* and *La Vie de Henri Brulard*. How one's reading was constantly interrupted, and one's joy enhanced as one closed these books in order to ponder some profound reflection or consider some penetrating psychological comment. So, as one of "the happy few," one's mouth watered on the threshold of paradise. . . .

Alas, the Henri Beyle of the essays, diaries and novels is here scarcely recognizable! Incredibly, one becomes bored! Of the two hundred and twenty-four letters published, most of the first fifty are written to the author's younger sister, Pauline. They are the letters of a young man forming a philosophy of life, and 'trying it out' by way of epistolary comment: we know the young man is Stendhal, but it is scarcely the Stendhal we know.

There are, of course, brilliant flashes: some admirable descriptions of the retreat from Moscow, blistering comments on the Military mind and its heroics, a portrait of Byron, candid and penetrating criticism of Madame de Stael, of Tallemant des Réaux, of Tom Moore. There are characteristic comments on England, "corrupted by a tinge of Hebraic ferocity": on the rich who, "have no passions, except that of hurt vanity." But the pieces of gold are rare and the poorer metal only too much in currency.

It seems plain that—unlike Rilke, for example—Stendhal set little store by his letters. Many of them, especially towards the end of this collection, express the boredom of a genius set to trivial work, in dull surroundings among mediocre people.

Frankly, this volume is quantitative rather than qualitative. The introduction by Monsieur Emmanuel Boudot-Lamotte is excellent; and the editing is careful. Mr. Norman Cameron's translation is adequate, but not inspired. All 'translation' should be adaptation; but every language possesses words that cannot be adapted, the French word, *concierge* being one of these, and for which *janitor* or *porter* is unsatisfactory. In Letter Sixty-seven reference is made to 'handsome teams,' the French perhaps being *équipages*, but the English scarcely seems comprehensible.

In short, Stendhal is not happily represented in the bulk of these letters, and bulk might well be curtailed in the true interests of a genius who took his ticket in a lottery, the winning of which meant he would be read a century or so later.

M. C.

BEAUMARCHAIS: LE MARIAGE DE FIGARO. Edited by E. J. Arnould, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., Docteur Ès-Lettres, Professor of French, Trinity College, Dublin. Blackwell's French Texts, Oxford. 6s.

The Marriage of Figaro (1784) has serious claims to be considered the liveliest and gayest of all French comedies. It brings together all the various currents which the comic muse in France had traversed since Molière, leaving aside the rather isolated one of Marivaux. Comedy in the eighteenth century mirrors faithfully that gradual shifting of emphasis from Versailles to Paris, from adulatory

approval of the absolutism of the Grand Monarque to systematic opposition and demands for equality and justice, from the power of birth and blood to that of money, which characterises the whole intellectual movement in France in that fatal century. The direct tradition of Molière's *Comédie de caractère* preserved, in Régnard and others, some of his gaiety but nothing of his profundity. Various lesser writers gave us genre painting in their *comédies de mœurs*. The pathetic, tearful "comedy" of Nivelle de la Chaussée, though a distant ancestor of the nineteenth century "triangle" plays, produced only works dreary as well as tearful in its own day. The "bourgeois tragedy" of Diderot, dealing in prose with cases of social injustice, produced one or two good plays like Sedaine's "*Le Philosophe sans le savoir*," which was translated and played in London at the time by a well-known actor named William O'Brien. "*Le Mariage de Figaro*" belongs to this school, but, at the same time, is more gay than anything since Molière and rightly burlesques the "larmoyant" element. There is, in addition, a typically eighteenth century touch of agreeable sensuality contained in the subject which is that spiciest of all social injustices, the *jus primae noctis* and in the quite original and charming creation of Chérubin. One must resist calling him Cherubino; the modern reader is haunted throughout by the magic melodies of *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

To all these matters Professor Arnould brings a vast amount of erudition. Nothing is left out, in his introduction and notes, that could be fitted in to the space allotted to him. This edition is a worthy successor in the same Blackwell's series to Professor Rudler's "*Le Misanthrope*," and praise could scarcely go higher. One regrets only that space forbade giving students more of the highly dramatic life of Beaumarchais himself. There are the materials for a most diverting series of French films in his memoirs.

Readers of this volume will await eagerly Professor Arnould's treatment of the sequel to *Figaro*, "*La Mère Coupable*," with its sinister Irish villain, "Bégearrs," and his mysterious accomplice who never appears, a "Spanish" banker named O'Connor!

LIAM O BRIAIN.

POEMS OF BAUDELAIRE. A Translation by Roy Campbell. Harvill Press. 2rs.

In the Preface to his verse translation of virtually the whole of Baudelaire, Mr. Roy Campbell says: "I am translating Baudelaire because he lived my life up to the same age, with similar sins, remorse, ostracisms, and poverty and the same desperate hope of reconciliation and pardon." The deep sympathy with, and delight in, his subject are as obvious as in his translation of St. John of the Cross and of some of Lorca's poems.

The arguments for and against such translations can all be exemplified here: misreadings, the limp after what is profound, subtle and infinitely rich; and also much that is impressive and beautiful, and that will enable those who cannot read the original to appreciate why Baudelaire has had so great an influence on later writers. Only the scholar and the fellow-poet can realize the enormous difficulties that await the translator; yet one glimpses them in comparing different

versions. For example, Sir John Squire's version of one of the Cat poems (verses 2 and 4) is:

Of knowledge and of pleasures amorous,  
Silence they seek and Darkness' fell domain;  
Had not their proud souls scorned to brook his rein,  
They would have made grim steeds for Erebus.

Their fruitful loins are full of sparks divine,  
And gleams of gold within their pupils shine  
As 'twere within the shadow of a stream.

And this is Mr. Campbell's closer rendering:

Friends both to lust and learning, they frequent  
Silence, and love the horror darkness breeds.  
Erebus would have chosen them for steeds  
To hearses. could their pride to it have bent.

Their fertile flanks are full of sparks that tingle,  
And particles of gold, like grains of shingle,  
Vaguely be-star their pupils as they glance.

The reader familiar with Baudelaire may quarrel violently with many lines in this book; but its fascination is considerable, and not least in its revelation of what one poet communicates to another, and the response.

SHAKESPEARE. By Allardyce Nicoll. Methuen (Home Study Books). 6s. 6d.

Professor Allardyce Nicoll is one of the most prominent historians of drama and editors of Shakespearean criticism. What he has to say to the casual reader on Shakespeare's plays is interesting considering his position, for he finds the major difficulty in evaluating the plays is the criticism about them, of which, paradoxically, this book is another example. "How can anyone hope," he asks, "in the midst of these warring factions, to reach a seasoned judgment on Shakespeare's works?" In answering this question Professor Nicoll spends approximately half of this slim volume in a guided tour through the "warring factions." These he divides into two major groups, the historical critics and the symbolists, concluding that "only by a combination of the two can we hope to grasp the full quality of (Shakespeare's) art and preserve the integrity of our evaluating judgments." In discussing Shakespearean criticism, Professor Nicoll is both lucid and informative, and this is undoubtedly the best short survey of contemporary Shakespearean scholarship.

The second half of this book dealing with the plays themselves is not so successful. His space is limited, and therefore Professor Nicoll's observations on any one play rarely extend beyond three pages; he contents himself largely with itemizing themes. When he does examine individual lines it is with an ambiguous

critical terminology: this, he tells us, "approaches the true comic," that "borders on the tragic." Some of the plays he dismisses with a few lines: *Love's Labours Lost* he calls only an experiment; *Romeo and Juliet* could become a comedy at any time. But although he is pressed for space, he does not forget to play the old game of hunting among the characters for Shakespeare's self-portrait.

As a guide to Shakespearean criticism this book is valuable, considered as an introduction to the works it is inadequate. What is needed is a book that will counteract the bad introduction to Shakespeare most literate English-speaking people have had in the schools.

W. H. VAN VORIS.

LADIES FIRST. By W. Macqueen-Pope. Allen. 20s.

*Ladies First* is a collection of biographies and anecdotes concerning the most prominent women connected with the English stage from the Restoration to Ellen Terry. This is a subject which has attracted many biographers but few have ever attempted a work with such scope. Unfortunately this book has many inexcusable faults. Apparently on the assumption that the general public will shy at footnotes and the machinery of scholarship, few of Mr. Macqueen-Pope's sources are given; the chronology is often bewildering because of the resolute placement of the more flamboyant personalities at the beginning and end of each chapter; no attempt is made to relate seriously the actresses to the period or the plays in which they performed. When periods are discussed it is with the naive assumption that the Restoration was wicked and the Victorians were good. Particularly irritating is a prose style which seems to have been formed by the musicals which Mr. Macqueen-Pope has chronicled and admires. An example from his account of the death of Mrs. Betterton reads, "But before the chariot of death came to convey her to those shades where her husband awaited her, she was able to make a will."

What is remarkable about the book is the subject. Try as he will, Mr. Macqueen-Pope cannot reduce the actresses to sentimental types; talented and naughty but kind, vowing the show must go on. Somehow their vitality and their unique talent are, apparent in even the purple passages. Because of this, the author's obvious enjoyment in what he is doing, and some excellent anecdotes, the book is often readable and enjoyable. The best theatrical biographies, however, are still those the actors wrote of themselves. The autobiographies of Cibber, Charlotte Charke, and George Anne Bellamy are more informative and more entertaining.

W. H. VAN VORIS.

CHILD OF THE BALLET. By Odette Joyeux. Translated by Arnold Haskell. Allan Wingate. 15s.

Those who have seen Max Ophuls' brilliantly-directed film, *La Ronde*, which is not likely to find its way to us in Ireland, but which ran for more than two years at the Curzon in London, will remember the unpleasant, gold-digging, young woman whose voracious appetite for food made her rôle as protégé of a, very



French, sugar-daddy, so cruelly memorable. The part was played by Mlle Joyeux, whose talent now expresses itself very differently in a book which has had enormous praise from the critics, both under its original title, "*Côte Jardin*," and in this excellent English translation by Mr. Haskell. It is a good book, although in some ways it irritates me nearly as much as the young woman in the film did. I am much older than Mlle Joyeux and I excuse my love of generalisation on the score of age. But who wants to be told by a talented individual in their mid-twenties that, "Childhood is like a motionless sea. Little boys and girls slumber while they wait for the winds and tides to carry them towards the crest of life."? It is not true; and, even if it were true, Mlle Joyeux is too young to say it. That is what happens if one entitles a chapter 'Destiny' and then sucks one's pencil for a minute or two, wondering how to begin.

But it would be quite wrong not to concede that many of Mlle Joyeux's generalisations are a great deal wiser than this. You have only to turn the page to find her saying, "It is impossible to cheat in classical ballet, impossible to compromise. . . . We have here a justice that has no parallel, a noble tradition that makes one smile at stage and screen with their improvisations and illusions." This is penetrating. Or she can say of her fellow-pupils in the school of the Paris Opéra Ballet, "I do not claim to have foreseen their destinies. And yet, with only one exception, I have never been surprised by their actions, their failures or their successes." A remark like that would have interested A. E., who, like Wordsworth, always saw the man in the child.

Odette Joyeux's impressions of the ballet school are highly personal, but most vivid; far better than her imaginative reconstruction of very early childhood which, to me, has a false ring about it. She was not the typical, opera *rat*. She is a failed dancer. She says herself, "I had no vocation. . . . I developed a dread of my dancing class. For me this supreme moment only meant toil, sweat, bleeding feet, my lungs pumping for breath and, above all, an attack of nerves." But she recreates the setting admirably, if a little self-consciously ("In life there is nothing to which I can feel indifferent.") Her picture of the little Greek girl; of the dancing mistress who passed under a cloud; of the *rats* indulging in an orgy of death scenes (I suddenly remember that at the same age I used to stage, mentally, dramatic masterpieces in which I expired, with equally melodramatic throes); of Cuvelier; of L'Opéra, backstage; of Venus in distress when the stage machinery went wrong—all these are excellent and help to make the book highly readable. It deserves its success.

MONK GIBBON.

BERNARD SHAW AND MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL: *Their Correspondence*. Edited by Alan Dent. Gallancz. 2rs.

This correspondence reveals Bernard Shaw in a totally unexpected light. His theory of love and marriage formed the most constant part of his artistic material. It is brilliantly expounded in his masterpiece, *Man and Superman*, and it is a recurring theme right through the plays. Man was the hunted and not the hunter: it was woman who hunted and marked man down: man was "the bee,

the spider, the marked-down victim, the destined prey." But this correspondence reveals Shaw as the Hunter, and not alone that but as the unsuccessful Hunter. The prey escaped.

The correspondence covers a long period, 1899 to 1939. But there are large gaps, and in both the early years and the later ones the letters are relatively infrequent. Almost half of the total belong to the years 1912-1913, when the friendship was at its height, when it came to a crisis, and began to decline. On his side, in those years, it is full of the wildest and most extravagant romanticism, and on hers of caution and playful affection. He addresses her at times as "Ever blesseddest darling": "Belovededest": "Belovedest": "My dearest love." In one letter he writes "Stella" (29 times) and then, "What is there left to say"; and in another, "so if you are idly curious as to whether I am still in love with Stella, the answer is yes (29 times again) and a million times yes. Cannot help it."

In August, 1913, she went to Sandwich for a rest, and he followed. She wrote him: ". . . Go wherever you like but don't stay here—if you won't go I must—I am very tired and I oughtn't to go another journey." He was, however, in his most extravagant mood and he moved in to the kill. But she left Sandwich in the night and left him flat.

It is plain that he was flabbergasted. He was hurt and angry, and wrote her harsh, upbraiding letters. She replied that he had only been playing, and that she had always known it and never taken him seriously, and that he had been using her to annoy his wife. A few months later she married George Cornwallis West.

The correspondence did not cease, but it became intermittent, and, years later, Shaw was very patient and considerate in explaining to her why he could not agree to any publication of his letters while his wife was alive. It never seemed to occur to him that he could safeguard his letters and relieve her relative impecuniosity by buying them himself—he could well have afforded to pay an extravagant sum for them. In 1937 he sent her her letters to him, with permission to print the whole correspondence after the death of himself and his wife.

The letters, of course, contain a certain amount of gossip, and when Shaw wrote of his art he was always most interesting. But their main interest is personal.

P. S. O'H.

WHITE JACKET. By Herman Melville. The Chiltern Library. John Lehmann. 10s. 6d.

When we think of Melville we do not at once visualise a list of wonderful books, but rather *Moby Dick*, the world's masterpiece. Yet of all hair-breadth exciting narratives, of all blue-lagoon romances, of all fascinating anthropological treatises (written with the distinction of an R.L.S. without parade), *Typee* remains supreme. And here now is a welcome reprint of *White Jacket*, which is about life on an American man-of-war—for he had one year's experience of that world. It is written with the same superlative clarity and power as *Typee*, with a touch here and there suggesting that he stood on the fringe of *Moby Dick*.

It is often an appalling book in the real sense of the adjective. You are obliged to steel yourself to read through certain chapters just as Melville had to nerve himself to write them, saying, "I would not be like the man who, seeing an outcast perishing by the roadside, turned about to his friend saying, 'Let us cross the way; my soul sickens at this that I cannot endure it'." Thus it is with the chapters on flogging. They have to be read to be believed—especially the Chapter on Flogging Through The Fleet. On one occasion Melville himself was brought to the mast to be flogged. In an earlier chapter he had described with shocking clarity what this meant. It was suddenly sprung upon him for no genuine reason—and it is suddenly sprung upon the reader. Rather than suffer the agony and degradation, he was about to hurl himself into the sea carrying the Captain with him, when there was a miraculous intervention and the sentence was rescinded. Frightful as this incident would be in reading about anyone, it is quite desperately holding when we know that it is about Melville, one of the most marvellous men who ever lived, who but for that intervention would have swiftly ended there and then as a "murderer" and a "suicide."

*White Jacket* is a long book absolutely crammed with facts revealing what life was like on an American man-of-war in the last century in the American Navy. When you open the book you enter a world, and at the end you are as glad to quit it as he was. But owing to Melville's artistic powers there is not a dull moment throughout. He understood all about the artistic method of not being too soft or pitiful about pitiful things—so that the reader can do all the feeling. More than that, more than being hard, he is comic. His portrait of the dreadful surgeon performing his operation on the hapless seaman, seems to me on a level with Dickens. There are many remarkable portraits in the book, notably Jack Chase, the author's hero; our hero also, and though it is hard to believe in so wonderful a person, we do believe in him. There are other extraordinary personages presented to us in this book. It occurs to one forcibly that before the age of "literacy" and social progress there was a high degree of literacy and individuality not known to-day among the people.

The book contains an admirable Introduction by Mr. William Plomer. He draws attention to the fact that while its enormous artistic value assures immortality to the world depicted here, its propaganda value was also so great that the abuses ventilated therein were soon abolished. Personally I dwell, I dwell continually, upon one Imaginary Conversation. All hands were obliged to witness punishment—i.e., flogging at the mast. I imagine Jack Chase (who always turned from it with moist eyes) saying to Melville—"What do you think of that, *White Jacket*?" (Melville's nickname). And Melville, an ordinary seaman, a unit amongst the five hundred there assembled on the deck, replying quietly—"I think I will abolish it."

A DEAN'S APOLOGY. A Semi-Religious Autobiography. By C. A. Alington. Faber and Faber. 12s. 6d.

"I am not one of those who suffer (to borrow a phrase of Conrad's) from 'that irresistible desire to impart information which is inseparable from gross ignorance,' nor do I feel that information about myself has any real

value to a reader. So far as the autobiographical part of this work has any interest, it can only be because of the great men to whom, in various ways, I have been indebted."

Such self-effacement has its own dangers; and the first part of this 'semi-religious autobiography,' with its light sketch of Dr. Alington's own life and the stories of such friends as Pollock, Henson, Gore and Lang, is perhaps best described as the agreeable monologue appropriate to a deanery drawing-room.

When, however, he turns, in the second part of the book, "not to expound the Christian faith as a whole, but to stress some aspects of it which seem to be unduly neglected, and to give some account of the process by which a particular believer has been led to the (admittedly imperfect) faith which he himself holds," his account is a valuable one. Dr. Alington confesses that his own lot has been cast in pleasant places and that he is temperamentally more ready to listen to the promises than to the warnings in the Gospels; and it could be argued that such testimony hardly meets the needs or the bitterness of the infinitely less fortunate. But, in fact, the sympathy and great humanity of this book, its argument that love and self-sacrifice are man's highest qualities, make it an inspiring tribute to the Christian way of life.

LITERATURE FOR AN AGE OF SCIENCE. By Hyman Levy and Helen Spalding. Methuen. 15s.

*Literature for an Age of Science* attempts "a rational assessment of the part literature plays, or could play, in integrating men more closely with the rational temper of this period"; and gives, in its discussion of the novel, poetry and drama, "the criteria by means of which the writer's audience—and even the writer himself—may assess the significance of the work in question." The criteria recognize, in fact, literature's social function only; but the fervour of the presentation may well satisfy the reader who shares the author's political views, or for whom literature is a minor experience.

"Of all the values that men have created for themselves in their struggle to find and develop a way of life, we have accorded the highest place to truth, to the power of imagination, and to social justice. No higher purpose could be found for the writer and the critic than to lead the common man to a full grasp of the historical meaning of these values and their potentialities for the future. For they are the first step in the conscious creation of man's history—a history that has barely begun."

Perhaps they would disdain the reminder that the reformer facing the artist with didactic relish too often suggests the unredeemed lion with the lamb; that the *zeitgeist* is an uncertain Muse; that while we are left our boundaries of flesh and mind the individual cannot be written off as a mere unit of the community: but when one examines their conception of the writer as an experimenter concerned "to bring into relief the internal pattern significant to the living present," what emerges is a portrait of the artist rigidly conforming to, and tested by, a pattern of values imposed by a materialistic society.



The limitations of the method are obvious when Professor Levy and Miss Spalding pass judgment on individual writers: Dostoevsky, Hardy, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot. They write, for example, of *The Cocktail Party*:

"Eliot is in fact concerned with fictitious abstract personalities. He appears to have ignored the elementary principle that personality has a significant meaning only when it expresses itself in relation to others, to other individuals, to other groups, and to the rest of the society in which one lives. . . . Eliot may stick on to them some 'intrinsic' importance, some 'value' in themselves, but these things merely adhere like a postage stamp and soon steam off. The final outcome therefore of high technical ability is the posing of a set of artificial problems and their resolution by fictitious means."

They are persuaded, too, that many classics survive because they are social documents.

The impressive feature of this book is its enthusiastic, and able, presentation of Soviet aesthetic theory without any overt reference to Marxism or use of its terms. What we know of the Soviet writer's abject self-criticism and hurried acceptance of the party-line of the moment would, of course, rather embarrass this plea for truth, imagination and justice as the goal for literature.

ROBERT BROWNING: A PORTRAIT. By Betty Miller. John Murray. 21s.

Repeatedly, in the course of his life, Browning declared that he had not, in his poetry, "unlocked his heart," and he made it clear—"If so, the less Shakespeare he"—that he took a poor view of any poet who did. He stated repeatedly that his poetry was dramatic and not personal, and that it did not represent what might be called his hidden life.

Mrs. Miller will have none of this. To her, all this was defensive camouflage, and the poet, in all his poetry, was simply writing out his own life, and experiences, doubts and trials. In his early manhood he had adopted Shelley's atheism and general attitude, and when he dropped that under the threat of the pain it would cause his mother, he was ever afterwards haunted by regrets and frustration. He was dominated at first by his mother, and then by his wife. This is the thesis with which Mrs. Miller approaches Browning and which she supports by quotations from his writings on the assumption that everything he wrote represented his own life and thoughts and experiences. The optimism of *Pippa* (1841) and the optimism of the Epilogue to *Asolando* (1890) are equally dismissed by Mrs. Miller as not genuine.

If one can accept her premiss, then it can be agreed that she argues her case with very great ingenuity and plausibility. She writes well, and her points are made clearly and forcibly. But if one cannot, as the writer cannot, accept her premiss, then the book becomes an exercise in the sort of ingenuity which proves that anybody, except Shakespeare himself, wrote Shakespeare's plays.

Every writer, of course, puts something of himself into his work. But that something is very selective, relatively minor in quantity, and transformed by the intellect into something entirely different from the small modicum of factual

experience it contains. Browning had the capacity which the writer of genius has of writing of things and happenings entirely outside of his personal experience. The important thing about him is not that he changed his opinions and his outlook—who does not, under the impact of the years?—but what sort of poetry he wrote. As a poet, he is the third of English poets. If he had remained an outspoken atheist and rebel, if instead of dressing carefully he had gone about in a smock and a slouch hat, it is exceedingly unlikely that he would have ousted Spenser from the second place, and doubtful if he would have held his own third.

P. S. O'H.

THE LITTLE TALES OF SMETHERS, and Other Stories. By Lord Dunsany. Jarrolds. 10s. 6d.

That Lord Dunsany is a master of the short story there can be no doubt. One critic has said: "This poet . . . has imagined colours, ceremonies and incredible processions that never passed before the eyes of Edgar Allan Poe or of De Quincey, and remembered as much fabulous beauty as Sir John Mandeville. . . ." The critic was W. B. Yeats, writing over forty years ago. Far more recently Sean O'Faolain affirmed Yeats' praise by classifying Lord Dunsany among the modern masters of the short story. It should be noted, however, that Yeats was writing of an entirely different Dunsany than was O'Faolain. Yeats' Dunsany was the archaic weaver of symbolistic mysteries, suggestive and ethereal; O'Faolain's a more mature writer, whose scope has lengthened to include every conceivable ramification within the *genre*, from prose metrical romance to science fiction, from fable to detective story.

*The Little Tales of Smethers*, Dunsany's seventeenth book of short stories, is a generally excellent collection of detective stories. There are twenty-six tales, nine of which concern Smethers, a most inimitable member of the Watson clan, and his colleague, Linley, of the Holmes family (there is also an arch villain, Steeger, who distinguishes himself by several very unusual crimes); the rest are varied tales of detection. All have in common the author's ingenuity and most of the time he manages to be at least a step ahead of the reader, as in "Once Too Often" or "The Speech" or "A Trade Dispute." He writes from all aspects of detective fiction—for example, there are a number of tales of ratiocination in the tradition of Poe—and the stories vary from the horrific to the humorous. While a few seem hurriedly put together and are disappointing, most are fast, delightful reading. One in particular, the charming fantasy of youth, "The Pirate of the Round Pond," shows us that Lord Dunsany has lost none of that sense of wonder that marked his early work.

All but one of the Smethers tales are told in the first person, and Lord Dunsany has created an appropriate style for his narrator:—

SMETHERS is my name. I'm what you might call a small man, and in a small way of business. I travel for Numnumo, a relish for meats and savouries; the world-famous relish I ought to say. It's really quite good, no deleterious acids in it, and does not affect the heart; so it is quite easy to push. I wouldn't have got the job if it weren't. But I hope some day to get

something that's harder to push, as of course the harder they are to push, the better the pay.

which only on occasion becomes too illiterate for the reader's comfort.

The opening story, "The Two Bottles of Relish," which is perhaps the most gruesome horror tale of our era, has already achieved fame in America, where Whit Burnett published it as the title piece of his anthology of the macabre. This is its first appearance in book form, I believe, in the British Isles. Technically, it is one of Dunsany's best stories, for by careful selectivity and a touch of Dunsanian whimsy he saves an idea which is potentially offensive from becoming so.

J. F. LA CROIX.

THE JOURNEY OUTWARD. By Maurice Collis. Faber and Faber. 2Is.

*The Journey Outward* is the first volume of Mr. Maurice Collis's autobiography. Its theme is the search for a vocation, an exploration, sometimes troubled by other aspirations, of the world of action. The book closes with the end of the first World War, and his awareness of an inward journey to be taken before that vocation is certain.

The account of his Killiney home and rather bleak years at an English preparatory school, of his contemporaries—including Rupert Brooke and Philip Guedalla—at Rugby, his life at Oxford and administrative post in Burma, cannot be said always to distinguish between private satisfactions and the interest of the reader. The chapters on the Burmese scene are written, as one would expect, with grace and sensitive appreciation of its enchantment:

"The clumps of bamboo were black silhouettes against the moon, or, when its rays fell on them, burnished and yellow. Their fallen leaves had an aromatic smell that rose up as you trod on them. The peacocks were roosting up aloft and, disturbed, would fly to another clump. When a wild peacock flies through moonlight it is not the royal bird that struts on a lawn but a presence of muted colour that silently passes. My recollection is of a violet sky. After thirty-seven years the scene presents itself like a Kangra miniature."

and throughout the book there are delightful vignettes—the dons, for example, at the High Table: "When these three were seated in colloquy on the dais at dinner, drinking from Stuart tankards of solid silver, they seemed rather to belong to art than to life, like masked impersonations of the humanities."

The book suffers, however, from its solemnity, modestly adorned on occasion, about Mr. Collis. The less pious reader may find a little wearisome the balance-sheet of his academic and athletic activities; the lingering over childhood letters; the recurring note:

"I was off to be a contemplative, not a man of action. But strange to relate, withdrawal was necessary for me if my particular faculties were to mature. Had I remained in Europe I believe that they would never have flowered. . . ."



"That without the clash at Rafa I might never have made the journey inward, is surely very singular. . . ."

One may, perhaps, be allowed to hope that the insouciance later life obliged him—as Mr. Collis himself puts it—to correct, will be given a little liberty in the succeeding volume.

HITLER. A STUDY IN TYRANNY. By Alan Bullock. Odhams. 25s.

VON RUNSTEDT. The Soldier and the Man. By Guenther Blumentritt. Foreword by Field-Marshal von Rundstedt. Translated by Cuthbert Reavely. Odhams. 16s.

The many books on every aspect of the Nazi régime, the denunciations of Hitler and his entourage on the one side, and of the defeatism of the German generals on the other, the elaborate edifice of recrimination and self-vindication, have only served to discourage hopes of understanding the unwavering loyalty that the German nation gave to its Fuehrer and to Nazi ideology. Mr. Bullock's study of Hitler and General Guenther Blumentritt's biography of von Rundstedt merit, however, the closest attention.

*Hitler* is a remarkable book. Using a massive amount of material, including the evidence produced at the Nuremberg Trials, Mr. Bullock presents the life of the man from its dingy beginning and hungry assimilation of crude anti-semitic and political ideas, through his wily tactics till Hitlerism had developed from a revolution and a crusade for prosperity and national glory to vilest tyranny and corruption, and on to the final moments when its creator, deranged, and abandoned by the greater part of that adulatory circle, dictated his last eulogy of himself and his myth, and then took his life. Mr. Bullock has disentangled in masterly fashion the complexities of the period and its incessant intrigues, and related them lucidly to their military and diplomatic background. Other historians will doubtless differently assess some aspects of Hitler's character and life, and freshly interpret events; but this study will long be regarded as authoritative.

General Blumentritt's portrait of von Rundstedt is a sober and appreciative one. The military career of an aristocrat, indifferent to politics and despising Hitler's sycophants, is admirably narrated. A brilliant strategist, he was opposed to all the grandiose Nazi war schemes and bitterly conscious of the absurdity of many of the Supreme Command's orders; but, though constantly frustrated and kept in ignorance of much essential information, he remained bluntly outspoken. He referred, for example, to the Atlantic Wall as 'a Propaganda Wall,' and even as 'Mouse-trap'—which epithet Hitler declared to be 'positively insulting.' After the invasion of Russia, he no longer believed in complete victory, though still devoting himself to his country and his duty. His courtesy to the defeated, unostentatious life, the affection of his officers and men, could hardly gratify the party leaders; but Hitler continued to use him, and to meddle with his plans as capriciously as with those of the other field-m Marshals. Von Rundstedt's various commands and his relations with Hitler and Rommel are discussed in detail; and General Blumentritt's objective and careful analysis throughout makes a book fascinating for the casual reader and valuable to the student.



**THE CROWDED HOURS.** The Story of 'Sos' Cohen. By Anthony Richardson. Foreword by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir John Slessor. Max Parrish. 15s. 6d.

**SO IT LOOKS TO ME.** By Sir William Darling. Odhams. 21s.

Sir William Darling's autobiography and the biography of Wing-Commander Lionel Cohen are the stories of men of action. The latter explained to an exasperated uncle in Johannesburg that he wanted to be "mixed up in things"; and the zest and thoroughness with which both men have achieved their common ambition make entertaining reading.

Mr. Richardson has obviously welcomed the opportunity to write the life of Wing-Commander Cohen (known to his friends as 'Sos') who, during his seventy-seven years of life has fought in four wars in all three services, and been ready to try most things once. When his father, a ship-owner in Newcastle-on-Tyne, died, obtuse relatives found him a dreary clerical post in London and had, soon afterwards and with much horror, to buy the unrepentant boy out of the Royal Marines. He was sent steerage to South Africa where, not always successfully, he worked as a waiter, journalist, gold-miner, prospector and ship-chandler. He made money and lost it; he was bitten by a green mamba; fell into a game-pit and landed on the back of a lioness; climbed the ropes of a drifting balloon to recover the release-cord; and, mistaken for a rebel, nearly faced a Portuguese firing-squad. The almost incredible number of his adventures in the bush, at sea and in the air, his amazing courage and enjoyment of life, do not need Mr. Richardson's device: an unhappy, if neat, arrangement of remembered events spacing the brief comments that passed between Sos and his pilot in their burning Halifax as it returned from an operational sortie. The nonchalance, too, is a little embarrassing ("Sos assued the Promoter that he was a pretty fair shot and that he'd rather be at his end of his rifle than any damn lion at the other because he'd blow its brains out and pass the decanter, there's a good chap."); but the book is vividly written and absorbing.

For Sir William Darling, "travelled roads were my destiny." He deserted the cheerless existence of a shop-assistant living-in at the premises of the Great Universal Providers in Bayswater, at the beginning of the century, to try street-hawking; he went to Ceylon as under-manager in a store, and to Australia, where he seized any chance of a livelihood. After distinguished service in France and Salonika during the first World War, he was, in 1919, on the staff of the Police Adviser in Dublin. He then returned to his home in Edinburgh and became Lord Provost and Conservative M.P. as well as business man, writer and broadcaster. *So It Looks To Me* is written with simplicity and nostalgia; and it reveals a pleasant taste for books, a lively interest in politics and much good sense.

**HERMATHENA.** A Series of Papers by Members of Trinity College, Dublin. No. LXXX. November 1952. Hodges, Figgis. 10s.

In "Archilochus and the Lycambides: A New Literary Fragment," the opening paper of this issue of *Hermathena*, Mr. G. W. Bond examines in valuable detail a papyrus fragment at Trinity College—"the earliest extant reference to (a) suicide and (b) a plurality of daughters." Dr. A. A. Luce concludes his "The Book of Kells and the Gospels of Lindisfarne—A Comparison." His admirable analysis of both manuscripts stresses the amplitude and richness of the Book of

Kells, the greater restraint and delicacy of the Gospels. Mr. F. La Touche Godfrey has written a brilliant defence of Hegel's criticism of the Law of Contradiction as formulated by logicians. The other distinguished contributions are: Professor B. Farrington's article, "The Meanings of *Voluptas* in Lucretius"; Sir John Miles's legal study, "The Case of Leochares." (Demosthenes Oration 44.); and the final section of Mr. G. W. William's essay on "The Curse of the Alkmaionidai." *Hermathena* concludes with several authoritative reviews of recent books on philosophy and classical subjects.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL FOR THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE. Vol. III. No. II. Nelson. 7s. 6d.

This issue of *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* will particularly interest the specialist with its continuation of Dr. E. Schrödinger's essay, "Are there Quantum Jumps?" and Dr. L. L. Whyte's "The Electric Current. A Study of the Role of Time in Electron Physics." Professor M. Polanyi has contributed a stimulating paper entitled "The Stability of Beliefs," illustrating "the elementary principles by which a conceptual framework retains its hold on the mind of a person believing in it." He analyses both magical beliefs and Soviet doctrines, and aligns them with the scientific beliefs he himself accepts. The lengthy section devoted to reviews and notes deals with several important books on philosophy and science.

ÉTUDES ANGLAISES. Nov., 1952. No. 4. Didier (4 et 6, Rue de la Sorbonne, Paris). 400 fr.

In this issue of an outstanding Journal, Professor Mossé discusses "Un Cas d'Ambiguïté Syntactique en Moyen-Anglais," and Professor F. Pons adds here some fascinating notes to an article, "Swift et Pascal," contributed in 1951 to *Langues Modernes*. M. Jean Simon writes on F. Scott Fitzgerald and urges that Europe accord to him the place given by American critics. M. R. Lalou's lively essay on "Shakespeare et le Cinéma," the notes on Auden, on Virginia Woolf's philosophy, and on French influence in English phrasing, and the many reviews, are all of considerable interest.

BOOKS ABROAD. An International Literary Quarterly. Autumn 1952. University of Oklahoma Press. One Dollar and Twenty-five Cents.

"Ireland after Yeats" by Mr. Sean O'Faoláin, in *Books Abroad*, is a very able and penetrating essay on the reasons for the present state of Irish writing. His consideration of the policy of the Abbey Theatre, the Literary Censorship, the difficulties facing the Irish novelist, deserves the closest attention. Mr. Lutz Weltmann writes perceptively on "The Making of Writers. Some Trends in Recent English Autobiographies," and there are critical studies of Rudolf Brunngraber by Mr. Ernst Waldinger, and of Emilia Pardo-Bazán by Professor R. Hilton. The reviews and the notes are, as always, a valuable survey of current European and American literature.

#### CORRECTION.

A HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES. By Steven Runciman. Vol. 2. (Cambridge University Press).

We regret that in our review of this book, we omitted by error the English price, which is 42/-.